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FEATURES

BATTLE OF THE BULGE • 70th ANNIVERSARY

14 THE GLORIOUS BLUNDER
The December 1944 Battle of the Bulge was an American disaster—until it turned into the greatest victory in US Army history. **By Brian John Murphy**

28 BRED TO BE AN ACE
Hamilton McWhorter grew up with hair-raising stories about World War One dogfighters. Then came World War Two... **By Robert F. Dorr**

34 BAD NEWS BADLY DELIVERED
The author was home on leave after the invasion of Tarawa when a woman asked what he knew about her son, a fellow marine who went missing there. **By Nick Cariello**

40 STARRING JANE FROMAN AS...THE SURVIVOR
As the USO plane prepared to land, a woman took Jane Froman's seat. Then the plane crashed. Froman lived. The woman did not. That was just the start. **By Patrice Crowley**

departments

2 KILROY **4** V-MAIL **6** HOME FRONT: The Black Market **8** PINUP: Acquanetta **9** FLASHBACK
10 THE FUNNIES: Furry Freedom Fighters **12** LANDINGS: Temple of the Infantryman **46** WAR STORIES
48 I WAS THERE: Paralyzed at the Siegfried Line **56** BOOKS AND MEDIA **60** THEATER OF WAR: *Where Eagles Dare*
62 78 RPM: "Baby, It's Cold Outside" **63** WWII EVENTS **64** GIs: Tending Wounded at Pearl Harbor

COVER SHOT: *The eyes prove it: these 29th Infantry GIs aren't posing; they're fighting. Their M1 carbine (left) and M3 submachine gun (right) are at the ready. It's January 4, 1945, and their 75th Division is taking back ground near Amonines in Belgium's Ardennes. The Battle of the Bulge has turned in the Americans' favor.* NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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PUBLISHER
James P. Kushlan, publisher@americainwwii.com
EDITOR
Carl Zebrowski, editor@americainwwii.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR
Eric Ethier
BOOKS AND MEDIA REVIEWS EDITOR
Allyson Patton
LANDINGS EDITOR
Patrice Crowley
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Robert Gabrick • Tom Huntington
Brian John Murphy • Joe Razes
ART & DESIGN DIRECTOR
Jeffrey L. King, jking@americainwwii.com
CARTOGRAPHER
David Deis, Dreamline Cartography
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Megan McNaughton, admin@americainwwii.com
EDITORIAL INTERN
James George, edintern@americainwwii.com
EDITORIAL OFFICES
4711 Queen Ave., Suite 202, Harrisburg, PA 17109
717-564-0161 (phone) • 717-977-3908 (fax)
ADVERTISING
Sales Representative
Marsha Blessing
717-731-1405, mblessing@americainwwii.com
Ad Management
Megan McNaughton
717-564-0161, admaterials@americainwwii.com
CIRCULATION
Circulation and Marketing Director
Heidi Kushlan
717-564-0161, hkushlan@americainwwii.com
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My Buddy from Mogmog

I GOT AN E-MAIL FROM BOB HURMENCE THE OTHER DAY. As editor of this magazine, with a work e-mail address published in print and online, I get a virtual ton of e-mail from companies I've never heard of, and most of it is aiming to peddle wares to me that have nothing to do with World War II. So it's nice to get legitimate e-mail, and some of my favorite comes from the WWII veterans who have written for us. Bob Hurmence is on that list.

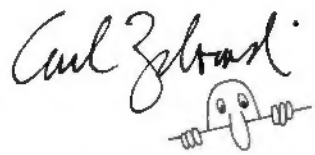
If you've been reading the magazine for a few years, you may know Bob Hurmence. He wrote the article in our February 2012 issue that we titled "Holiday on Mogmog." Hurmence was a US Navy radioman first class aboard the battleship *Iowa*, which spent part of the war's final year at Ulithi—the greatest-ever US Navy anchorage in the Pacific. It turned out that there wasn't much to do there. The navy gave the boys busywork to occupy their time. So when they got the chance for liberty on the island of Mogmog, it was a big deal.

To men stuck on a ship for months, a few hours on Mogmog sounded like paradise. But the sailors arrived to find that the island's razor-sharp coral kept them from swimming and lying on the beach. There was little shade to be found. The beer was fine, though Hurmence never cared for the stuff, and the hot dogs were, well, hot dogs. By the time the day ended, the boys were glad to get back to their ship. "A day on Mogmog had proved to us that even in the name of recreation, there were worse places to be than our ships," Hurmence wrote.

I had limited communication with Hurmence before I'd read his article, but after I took in what he had to say, I felt like I knew him. So I was shocked when I opened that recent e-mail. It turned out that it wasn't from Bob Hurmence. It was from his e-mail address. It was a note from one of his family members announcing that he had died. I got choked up.

We all realize that the members of the WWII generation still with us are getting well up there in age. Obituaries, then, might not be a great shock. But for people we know, it's different. Thanks to elders like Bob Hurmence telling us about themselves, we get to know people from varied places, with diverse backgrounds and experiences, who lived the days of their youth in an age most of us have only read and heard about. It's not always easy getting to know people, of course, as I was reminded when the news of Hurmence's death choked me up, but I'm not sure there's a better way to learn about the past, and about what it is to be human.

So thanks, Bob. And thanks to all the veterans of the military and the home front who welcome us into their stories.



Carl Zebrowski
Editor, *America in WWII*

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REVIEWED AND APPROVED

I ENJOY READING EACH ISSUE of *America in WWII* from cover to cover. You provide fascinating and well-written articles on all aspects of American involvement in the war. I earned my MA in History with a focus on World War II, the Space Race, and the Cold War. I have shelves and boxes jammed full of books on this subject matter, so I have to be discriminating when I am looking to add a book to my personal library. I am fortunate that I am a volunteer at the National World War II Museum here in New Orleans where we get to host top-notch authors who visit us to discuss their latest books.

Another reliable source of book recommendations that I trust is found at the end of every issue of your magazine. I have purchased several books based on your reviews. I just finished reading the October 2014 issue, and I was deeply impressed by Drew Ames's review of *The Arsenal of Democracy: FDR, Detroit, and an Epic Quest to Arm an America at War* by A.J. Baime. Ames was able to distill a nearly-400-page book down to its essential material in a manner that told me exactly what I needed to know without any extraneous words or commentary.

I have written book reviews before and I know they are not as easy as they may appear to the layperson. So kudos to Ames—and to your staff for bringing your readers a fantastic magazine about one of the most important topics in our nation's history.

ROBERT CARVER
Jefferson, Louisiana

ALMOST BURIED ALIVE

AS A NEW READER to your outstanding magazine, I find the content to be most interesting, new, and informative. Of particular personal attraction to me was the article "Losing Dad" [by Allyson Patton, August 2014], which affected me deeply.

Although a pre–Pearl Harbor father of two young children (and at 32 years old, an old man, compared to younger enlistees), my paternal grandfather, George Villalva of El Paso, Texas, was drafted into the army in January 1944 under the Father Draft Act. As a combat infantryman in Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 351st Infantry

Regiment, 88th Infantry Division, Private First Class Villalva served in Italy from mid-1944 until late 1945. During one harrowing artillery barrage in October 1944, he was so seriously injured that the tending combat medic found no vital signs and declared him killed in action. After his seemingly lifeless body was strapped to a mule for transport down the mountain, he was miraculously revived and managed to regain consciousness to stop an Italian laborer who was digging his grave.

My grandfather was incredibly fortunate. He survived the war and returned home to his young family, unlike many of his fellow GIs, as the article sadly illustrated. Up to his final days, in October 2001, my grandfather never forgot his fallen comrades, and he often mourned their loss. I thank Allyson Patton for effectively telling the heart-breaking but significant story of the countless fathers who fell in World War II. We as a nation honor their role as beloved fathers and also honor their noble sacrifices as soldiers.

ALEJANDRO P. VILLALVA
Dayton, Ohio

GI BRUSHES WITH FAME

I WILL SUGGEST a possible feature for the magazine. I have asked many WWII veterans if they ever served with or met anyone famous during the war. The answers vary and some are very insightful. The following are a couple of examples: at one time, my dad's US Navy Armed Guard lieutenant was Wayne Millner, Notre Dame All-American and future NFL Hall-of-Famer; my father-in-law, as a second lieutenant, met General Dwight D. Eisenhower—of course, it helped that he was at the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force at the time.

DONALD GARLIT
Canton, Michigan

Editor's note: *We'd love to hear personal WWII stories of encounters with the famous. If you were in the war, tell us in your own words. But we'd also appreciate hearing from sons, daughters, grandchildren, and others, telling about the time the veteran you know ran into a celebrity. Maybe we'll publish your story on our War Stories pages.*

ENDING WITH A PARTHIAN SHOT

I HAVE SEEN THE ARTICLE "Parting Shot" only once, in the D-Day issue of WWII dated Spring 2014 [our *Remembering D-Day* special issue]. It was a fine, brief article that I believe should be continued. However, it should be called by its true name: Parthian Shot, for that is where the term parting shot was derived. Now the history...

The Parthians were inhabitants of Parthia proper, which is northwest of Persia, about 600 miles long, and wholly surrounded by mountains. It was early subject to Media then to Persia and also Alexander and his successors. It became independent in 256 BCE.

The Parthians were the bane of the Roman Empire as it extended itself. The Parthian method of fighting on horseback was devastating, especially at the end of an encounter, when Parthians turned backward and fired deadly volleys of arrows over the tails of their horses at the hapless, pursuing Romans. That in fact is the true parting shot, which I prefer to call by its true name: Parthian shot.

JAMES NEUBAUER
New Berlin, Wisconsin

Send us your comments and reactions—especially the favorable ones! Mail them to V-Mail, America in WWII, 4711 Queen Avenue, Suite 202, Harrisburg, PA 17109, or e-mail them to editor@americainwwii.com.

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Psst, Wanna Buy a Ribeye?

by Carl Zebrowski

ROSEMARY BENNETT was a young grade-schooler when she walked outside her house with her family one morning to go for a drive and found their car propped up on blocks. A thief had come in the night, jacked up the vehicle, and made off with the tires.

It was a big loss for the family under any circumstance, but in the days of wartime rationing, it was especially big. Since rubber was scarce and critical to the military, tires were one of the most strictly controlled products. A citizen couldn't just walk into the local dealership and leave with replacements. Much red tape needed to be cut, and in the end, the chance of getting new tires wasn't great.

Bennett recalled that her dad had a solution. "I don't remember how we got there—probably on tires borrowed from a neighbor—but in the dark of night, we drove into a black market House of Tires!" she wrote. "Dad bought four 'hot' tires and paid through the nose. He might even have bought back his own tires. My parents were not stern or strict, but they clearly informed me that this hot-tire deal was a secret. And they meant it!"

Like most wartime Americans, Mr. and Mrs. Bennett followed the rules. They abided by the rationing of and price restrictions on food and other goods, programs the federal government began in 1942 to control inflation and to make sure all Americans could get what they needed before local supplies dried up. But sometimes there were extenuating circumstances. That's when the place to turn was the black market.

The black market appeared almost as soon as rationing began. Mostly it was legitimate businesses charging more than the price ceiling for an item in exchange for not collecting all the government-issued stamps that were legally required for the purchase. That way, by paying extra, the customer could get items he or she didn't have enough stamps for.

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Prevention being cheaper and easier than enforcement, the Office of War Information printed reams of propaganda against the black market.

Most commonly purchased on the black market were meats, tires, gasoline, liquor, nylons, and shoes. Beef was the biggest, since it was perishable and so much went to the military—60 percent of prime cuts and 80 percent of the rest. About 20 percent of all beef reached the black market, with farmers selling cattle illegally to middlemen who paid higher-than-permitted prices.

Old West–style cattle rustling made a vigorous return, revamped with modern technology. Rustlers fired rifles with silencers. Then they skinned the carcasses and loaded them onto trucks, mobile slaughterhouses where the meat was processed and delivered to packers. There was even the occasional shootout with ranchers.

Gasoline and tires were the next-most-likely black market purchases, due to scarcity and military need. Tires were stolen to be resold, as the Bennett family found out the hard way. Gas was frequently, and often unwittingly, sold to customers who presented counterfeit coupons. An estimated five percent of all gas was purchased that way, up to 2.5 million gallons every week. Gasoline rackets were easy work with high reward. "The risks are fewer, the work is clean and not unpleasant, and the operating costs are not nearly so prohibitive [as in other rackets]...," read a *Newsweek* article in March 1944. "The profits are unbelievably high...."

With the rise of the black market, organized crime took off. Mobsters hijacked trucks transporting products, robbed government warehouses of ration stamps, and printed counterfeit coupons. Chester Bowles, administrator of the Office of Price Administration (OPA), which oversaw rationing and price controls nationwide, said, "We must smash the racketeers, if we are to save soldiers' lives."

Smashing the racketeers was easier said than done. The OPA had only 3,100 investigators, which meant each one was responsible for about 1,000 businesses. Still, it got results. One in every five US businesses received OPA warnings, and one in 15 was charged with illegal sales. The sugar industry was notorious; of 1,000 companies scrutinized, 750 were prosecuted. An average of 4,500 OPA cases reached the courts every month. But the convicted got light sentences—less than 2 percent got prison time.

All the blatantly criminal, marginally illegal, and wink-and-nudge activity didn't change the fact that most people did the right thing most of the time. As Bill Morgan, a wartime child in Pipestone, Minnesota, recalled, "When our local butcher offered Mother a cut of sirloin steak—an item few people saw in those days—she refused to take it because, she said, 'I have three boys in the service.'" ★

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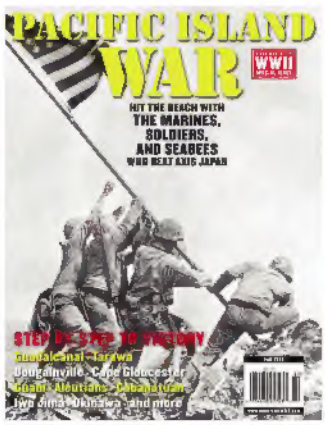
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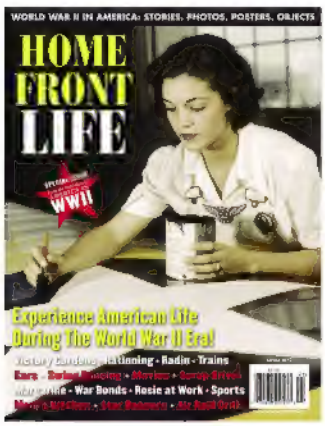
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Acquanetta

To moviegoers, she was Acquanetta, known for her roles in 1940s jungle dramas. Some called her the Venezuelan Volcano, though she wasn't from Venezuela or anywhere in South America. *Jet* magazine, targeted at African American readers, celebrated her as an African American actress, but her true ethnic origin, like her family ties and past, was shrouded in mystery.

One story said she was Arapaho, born Burnu Acquanetta in Ozone, Wyoming, in 1921 and orphaned at a young age. At 15, she began living independently and eventually found work as a model in New York City. She assumed a Latin identity because it was exotic and fit her looks, but she dropped the act after she moved to Hollywood and the Screen Actors Guild asked to see her Venezuelan passport.

Acquanetta is best known for her role in *Tarzan and the Leopard Woman* (1946), but she also had a small part in *Arabian Nights* (1942) and starred in *Jungle Woman* (1944) and *Dead Man's Eyes* (1944). She was known for her long black braids, unusual widow's peak, and extravagant silver and turquoise jewelry.

Acquanetta left Hollywood in the 1950s. She moved to Phoenix, Arizona, and married Jack Ross, the owner of a local car dealership. She died in 2004 due to complications of Alzheimer's disease.

—*James George*
editorial intern

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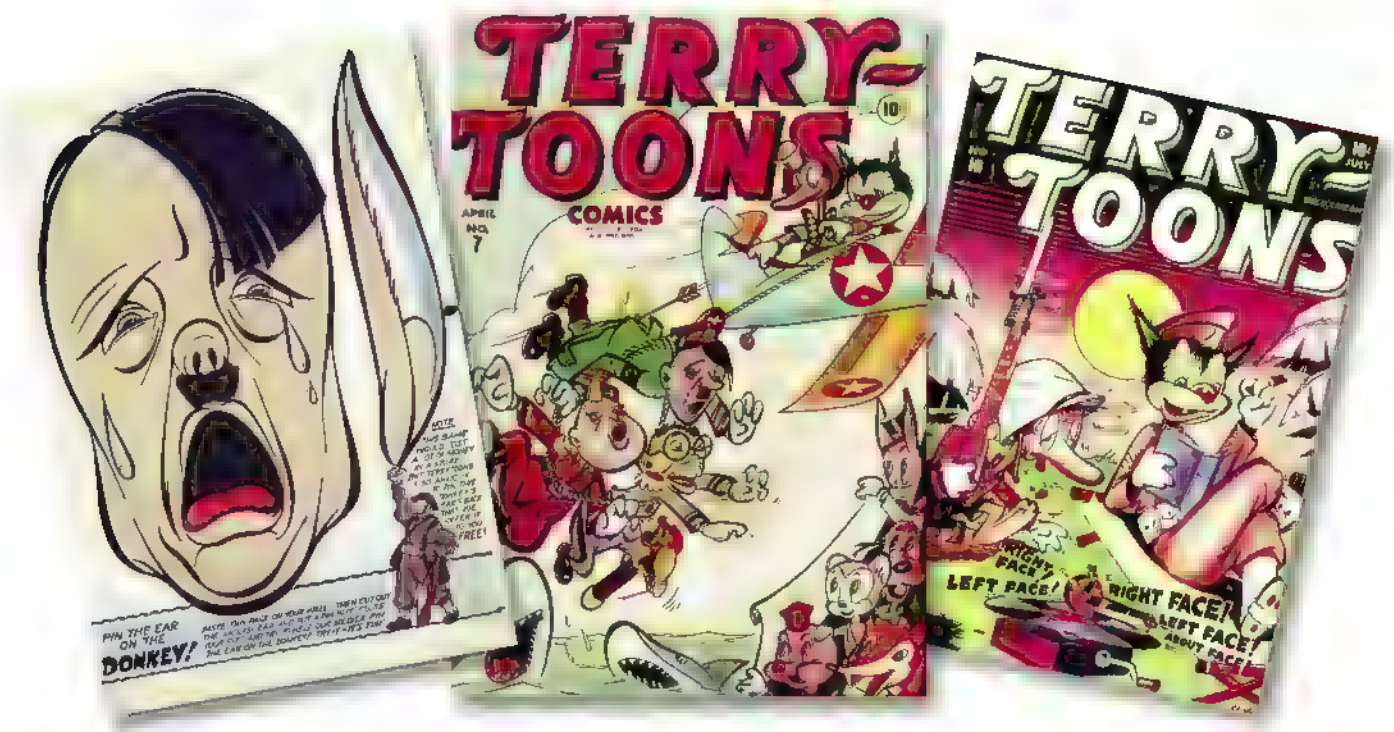
Furry Freedom Fighters

by Arnold T. Blumberg



PICTURE THE CAST OF *Bambi* working for the war effort and you have a pretty good idea of certain early 1940s *Terry-Toons*. In 1942's Oscar-nominated animated short *All Out for V*, cartoonist Paul Terry, founder of the studio Terrytoons, had wasps sewing buttons on army uniforms, termites sawing logs into lumber for military construction, ants harvesting corn kernel by kernel to feed the troops, and a mouse painting the moon to darken it during a blackout. If that wasn't enough for the most fervent patriot, there was even a cuddly white rabbit firing a big gun at Japanese beetles with Adolf Hitler moustaches

Terry's assortment of humanlike animals found its way into wartime comic books in a series from Marvel Comics' predecessor, Timely Comics, the same publisher that brought Captain America to wartime readers. *Terry-Toons Comics* regularly took up war-related themes, with covers poking fun at the Axis and even at America's own soldiers—earnest and determined but fatigued.

One particularly sharp-edged *Terry-Toons* feature offered readers a cartoon donkey ear to cut out and apply to an adjacent head: "Pin the Ear on the Donkey!" But this was no ordinary donkey head. It belonged to none other than Adolf Hitler—a caricatured jackass with a pig nose, shedding large tears over the certainty of eventual Nazi defeat in the war. It was a characteristic jab from the publisher that had debuted *Captain America* in 1941 with a cover showing the star-spangled title hero punching the Fuhrer in the nose.

Terry's forestful of furry, scaly, feathered, and shelled forest creatures weren't the typical heroes battling bad guys, but they promoted the effort against the Axis all the same. They showed comic-book readers, young and old alike, that it took many different types doing many different things to win the fight—superhuman abilities and flashy costumes not required. ★

DR. ARNOLD T. BLUMBERG *is a teacher and the author of books on comic books and other pop culture topics. He resides in Baltimore, Maryland.*

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Cartoonist Paul Terry showed that it didn't take a superhero to challenge Axis bullies in comic books. He put his cute *Terry-Toons* creatures in uniform and sent them to fight (center and right). He scored a direct hit of his own on the enemy with this party game (left).

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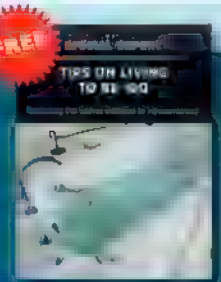

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Temple of the Infantryman

by Robert Gabrick

For many Americans, Bill Mauldin's portrayal of soldiers in his *Willie and Joe* cartoons embodies World War II's infantrymen—good and decent, gritty and unshaven foot soldiers who endured a hellish world of frigid cold, blistering heat, rain, mud, snow, and ever-present death. Despite General George S. Patton's belief that Mauldin's characters cast infantrymen in an unfavorable light, GIs themselves took Willie and Joe to heart.

But Willie and Joe *represent* infantrymen. *Telling their story* is something different, and not any easier. With start-up funding of $100 million, 190,000 square feet of floor space, and extraordinary exhibits, the National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center has taken a crack at telling that story—the 239 year story of America's infantrymen.

Located near the entrance to Fort Benning, Georgia, just south of Columbus, the museum opened five years ago, in 2009. Since then, more than 1.5 million visitors have walked through its entry rotunda, where *Follow Me*, a statue of an infantryman signaling to his brothers in arms, greets them, standing as symbol of the infantryman's commitment to action.

First in line inside is the museum's touchstone exhibit, "The Last 100 Yards," whose title reflects the belief that, of all the parts of an army, it's the infantry that owns the last 100 yards of a battlefield, ultimately confronting the enemy bayonet to bayonet. Described here as "an emotional march into the past," the exhibit opens on an upward-sloping ramp that features realistic dioramas and sounds of battles at Yorktown, Antietam, Soissons, Omaha Beach, and Corregidor and in Vietnam and Iraq. Artifacts include a WWII glider, an armored Bradley Fighting Vehicle, and a Vietnam-era Huey helicopter. Lending an air of realism that many exhibits lack are the life-size human figures in each scene. They aren't mannequins. They're cast sculptures of real active-duty soldiers, and they populate other exhibits in the museum as well.

At the National Infantry Museum, a US paratrooper lands to liberate Corregidor in the Philippines in 1945. The figure, like all those in the museum, is based on an actual soldier.

At the end of this exhibit, visitors enter the Fort Benning gallery, which gives a history of the facility known as the Home of the Infantry. Established in 1919, Fort Benning trained thousands of WWII soldiers and continues to instruct infantrymen today. A simulated rifle range here is the same as the one the infantry uses to sharpen skills. Visitors can test their marksmanship. (I did quite well.)

The museum's gallery level features exhibits on the role of the infantry during specific eras of American history. "The International Stage: 1898–1920" exhibit addresses America's emergence as a world power. It covers the Spanish-American War, the Boxer Rebellion in China, and World War I. "The Cold War: 1947–1989" explores the military and nonmilitary confrontations of the United States and the Soviet Union. Included here are various proxy wars, as well as the Korean and Vietnam wars. "The Sole Superpower: 1989–Present" highlights the role of today's infantryman. The Armor and Cavalry gallery cuts across all eras, beginning with the American Revolution and the use of horses in battle and culminating with World War II and its tanks.

The must see exhibit for those interested in World War II is "A World Power: 1920–1947." The dazzling array of artfully presented displays here highlights the role of the infantry in the war. The outer wall traces the course of the war in the European theater, while an inner wall covers the Pacific. In between, kiosks filled with a nearly overwhelming abundance of photographs, maps, dioramas, and artifacts tell the story of various facets of the war. The exhibit offers visitors a broad spectrum of subjects ranging from the Axis powers and the Holocaust to the China-Burma-India theater and the dropping of the atomic bombs. Films and audio recordings enhance the experience.

The museum's curators have done a wonderful job connecting artifacts to actual

ALL PHOTOS THIS STORY ROBERT GABRICK

Upper left: One of the infantryman's hardest jobs? Carrying his gear and weapons. The museum's "Load" display, featuring a WWII backpack, addresses that struggle. Lower left: By World War II, armor like this M3 Stuart Light Tank replaced horse cavalry. Infantry tactics for fighting beside tanks evolved. Right: Just inside the National Infantry Museum is the bronze *Follow Me*, embodying the US foot soldier's legacy of action.

infantrymen, often including a photograph of a soldier and details about an object he owned. Prominent individuals such as Audie Murphy, who won every US Army combat medal including the Medal of Honor, share the spotlight with ordinary GIs whose combat boots, prison garb, or shrapnel-pierced helmet are on display. Visitors can experience the personal dimension of war by listening to oral history accounts or by reading V mail letters that loved ones exchanged.

Often, nuggets of information await the careful reader of the exhibit's many placards. The display on Operation Downfall, the planned invasion of Japan, states, "Hundreds of thousands of Purple Hearts were manufactured" in anticipation of massive casualties. Fortunately they were not needed, as the atomic bombs ended the war.

Just outside the museum building is the World War II Company Street. The demands of the war had led to the construction of numerous Series 700 buildings at Fort Benning. Intended to be merely temporary, the solidly built structures remained in use for more than 50 years. When the army began to dismantle them in the 1990s, an example of each type of building was moved to what are now the grounds of the National Infantry Museum and restored. The street includes barracks, a chapel, an orderly room, a supply building, and a mess hall—racially segregated during World War II. It also has the headquarters and sleeping quarters used by General George Patton prior to his deployment to North Africa. Guided tours go inside the buildings, allowing visitors to see period correct artifacts in place, arranged to give the impression that their owners will return shortly.

There's plenty more here besides the exhibits. The Infantry Theater shows a short film at regular intervals that gives a glimpse of what is described as "the mindset of the infantryman," letting combat veterans speak for themselves. The Ranger Hall of Honor tells of exceptional US Army Rangers. Fort Benning's Officer Candidate School Hall of Honor recognizes elite alumni.

Past and present infantrymen come together on Inouye Field, where weekly ceremonies are held for Fort Benning's graduates. Named for the late Medal of Honor recipient Daniel K. Inouye, a US Senator from Hawaii and member of the famed Japanese-American 442nd Infantry Regimental Combat Team in World War II, the parade ground opened in 2009 with veterans of major American wars and descendants of theirs sprinkling the field with soil collected from Yorktown, Soissons, Normandy, Corregidor, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

The soil seeding ceremony, like the National Infantry Museum itself, reminds new soldiers that they walk where other infantrymen fought and died before them. Revolutionary War. World War II. Iraq War. The Next War. One US infantryman. ★

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ROBERT GABRICK *is a contributing editor and writes frequently for the magazine.*

the

Snow underfoot and snow overhead dogs men of the 82nd Airborne Division's 504th Parachute Infantry—and their mule. They are advancing with a tank to battle Germans near Herresbach, Belgium, in January 1945. Despite the snow, the Battle of the Bulge is going the Americans' way a month after it began.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

glorious blunder

The December 1944 Battle of the Bulge was an American disaster—until it turned into the greatest victory in US Army history.

by Brian John Murphy

the glorious blunder

by Brian John Murphy

FLAMES AND SMOKE EXPLODED from the conference room at the Wolf's Lair, Adolf Hitler's secret headquarters in East Prussia. SS guards rushed in to find a smoking, smoldering chaos of splintered furniture and scorched wood. Three officers were dead. The wounded groaned, tangled in wreckage.

Miraculously, or diabolically, Hitler walked out of the ruined conference room that day, July 20, 1944. His trousers in tatters, and with a broken eardrum and a few burns and bruises, he was nonetheless alive and fully able to exact revenge on his would-be assassins—high officers of Germany's military.

From now on, Hitler would not trust his generals. He would reserve his most secret plans for the few most Nazified officers in his military family, especially Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, head of the armed forces, and his deputy, Colonel General Alfred Jodl—two lickspittle yes-men. Hitler was now running the entire war on his own

Nearly two months later, on September 16, Keitel, Jodl, and Colonel General Heinz Guderian, army chief of staff, presented Hitler with a review of the disastrous situation on the war's two major fronts. To the east, Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin's generals had finished executing Operation Bagration in White Russia (today's Belarus). The Red Army had trapped and destroyed an entire German army group of 500,000 men.

In the west, between the D-Day landings of June 6 and the surrender of Paris's German garrison on August 25, the Americans, British, French, and Poles had destroyed 40 German divisions and wrecked German Army Group B in Normandy. The Allies had killed 240,000 Germans in action and bagged 50,000 POWs. The Germans had lost 344 tanks and self-propelled guns, 2,447 fighting and transport vehicles, and 252 artillery pieces. Adding casualties from the American invasion of Southern France, the Germans had lost a total of some 400,000 killed and captured on the western front

These were catastrophic losses. Overall, 78 divisions were gone or nearly gone, and all their heavy equipment was lost. Roughly 1.5 million men were dead, captured, or missing. It was time for an armistice, if not outright surrender. Of course, no one dared suggest this to Hitler. But by not suing for peace then, Hitler and his insiders made Germany's destruction and occupation inevitable. Hitler continued the war to delay his own doom and to enable fantasies of escape as long as possible.

Jodl was still outlining the situation in Southern France when Hitler interrupted. "I have just made a momentous decision," Hitler said. "I shall go over to the counterattack, that is to say, [as he pointed to the map] here out of the Ardennes, with the objective: Antwerp!"

Peace and Quiet

FAR AWAY IN VERSAILLES, FRANCE, on October 8, Major General Omar Bradley was at the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force, venting. "If the other fellow would only hit us now!" the 12th Army Group commander groused to Lieutenant General Walter Bedell "Beetle" Smith, close aide to Supreme Allied Commander Dwight Eisenhower. "I'd welcome a counterattack. We could kill many more Germans with a good deal less effort if they would only climb out of their holes and come after us for a change."

But the Germans seemed resolutely dug in on the Third Reich's border, manning the concrete defenses of the Siegfried Line, or Westwall, as they called it. American units got ground up at the border, especially in capturing Aachen, Germany, and attacking in the Hurtgen Forest. At almost every point on the western front, tough enemy resistance, overstretched supply lines, and extraordinarily rainy weather delayed the Allies' advance to the Rhine River, the last barrier to Germany's heartland.

At the edge of eastern Belgium's thickly forested Ardennes region, and in much of Germany's bordering Schnee Eifel, a low, heavily wooded mountain range, all was quiet. The US First Army's VIII Corps, commanded by Major General Troy H. Middleton, occupied this sector. Middleton's corps was the First Army's right flank, straddling the German-Belgian border and running south, ending at the left flank of Lieutenant General George S. Patton's Third Army in Luxembourg. In front of Middleton's corps, according to army intelligence, was the played-out German 7th Army, which had been badly mauled in Normandy. Middleton's command was in the Ardennes to rest, refit, and train. There was an enemy on the other side of no-man's land, but as the worst winter in a generation commenced in Europe, the main foes were cold and mud.

At the left center of Middleton's VIII Corps, the 106th Infantry "Golden Lion" Division was deployed in an arc protruding into

ALL PHOTOS THIS STORY, NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Above: Adolf Hitler greets the general he chose to command Operation Watch on the Rhine, his surprise breakout attempt in the Ardennes: Field Marshal Walther Model, veteran of the 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union. Opposite: With a wrecked American halftrack as backdrop, German infantry troops move through US lines at the outset of the Ardennes blitz in this still from a Nazi propaganda film.

Germany, hugging the Siegfried Line. Troops seldom came any greener. The men had received about six weeks of basic training before sailing to Europe. Then, while they waited to move to the front, the army damaged unit cohesion and morale by cherry-picking men to go into the repple depple—the replacement depot system used for filling holes in battle-scarred divisions. The Golden Lions were as brave as any American kids sent to fight a war, but rushed to the front in the Ardennes under-trained and inexperienced, they were sitting ducks.

Middleton also had the 28th and 4th Infantry Divisions, freshly mangled in the Hurtgen Forest, where they lost a combined total of some 9,000 killed, wounded, and captured. The survivors were dog tired. Here in the quiet sector, they were supposed to greet and train replacement troops. The VIII Corps also included a combat command from the 9th Armored Division and, at the end of the left flank, a small task force from the 14th Cavalry.

The green 99th Infantry Division of Major General Leonard Gerow's V Corps was on the 14th Cavalry's north flank. Staff Sergeant Cecil R. Palmer of the division's 394th Infantry Regiment remembered the deployment as distinctly miserable:

It was a very cold and rainy season, and the roads were basically impassable due to mud, even to 6x6 vehicles.

Since we were still considered relatively new troops, our Regiment had been sent to the Ardennes because it was thought to be a reasonably "safe" area that was not expected to see much action. Because of that misconception, we ended up in the middle of the biggest battle that would help determine the outcome of WWII. We were given the nickname "Battle Babies" because of our inexperience.

There were 68,822 men in the VIII Corps on December 15. They were supposed to cover 88 miles of the Allied front. But only about 10 percent were actually in foxholes facing the enemy. That was an average of 73 men per mile, not nearly enough for a continuous battle front. Gaps of empty forest lay between concentrations of troops. Patrols crossed these gaps, but for all intents and purposes they were undefended

Preparing to Roll the Dice

STARTING IN OCTOBER, Hitler selected men and machines from all over occupied Europe to bet in his last great gamble of the war, codenamed Operation Watch on the Rhine. He thinned out garrisons in Denmark, Norway, and Italy. He selected battle-tested

the glorious blunder by Brian John Murphy

Panzer divisions from Eastern Europe and the Russian front, which was dangerously shaky even before the subtraction. Luftwaffe ground crews were issued rifles and put on westbound trucks. Navy shore personnel suddenly found themselves in the army.

Meanwhile, Allied bombers were draining the Reich's fuel supply. They pounded the few oil refineries, ersatz fuel plants, and tank farms in Germany during the last months of 1944. The result was a desperate shortage of gasoline and diesel. The gas delivered to the western front would not be enough for Hitler's counterattack. The German plan counted on capturing American fuel dumps to keep the offensive moving.

By December 15, the ridges and folds of the Ardennes and Eifel hid the bulk of the Reich's armored forces and best remaining infantry: the reconstituted Army Group B under Field Marshal Walther Model. He had three armies poised for the attack. The northernmost was the 6th Panzer Army under SS Colonel General Josef "Sepp" Dietrich, an armor commander and

second in command of the *Schutzstaffel*, or SS, the Nazi party's armed core. Dietrich's first big objective was to capture the town of St. Vith, where the best roads leading to the Meuse River passed. The 5th Panzer Army of General Hasso von Manteuffel occupied the middle of the line. Manteuffel's task was to seize Bastogne, a roadway hub in the battlefield's south-central portion. He hoped to do this with little or no fighting. The southern portion of Model's line would be General Erich Brandenburger's 7th Army. Brandenburger's job was to keep Patton's Third Army from intervening.

The German attack to the west went against the "grain" of the land, where snow-choked ridges and valleys ran northeast to southwest. A few two-lane paved highways ran through the area, but mostly there were dirt roads and narrow cow paths that became slick ice in a freeze and bottomless mud in a thaw. No highway crossed the battlefield from east to west. Success depended on capturing many bridges to keep the offensive on time. Hitler expected the attack to reach and cross the Meuse River en route to Brussels and Antwerp by the end of day four.

Hitler's success depended also on lousy weather, to keep US Army Air Forces and British Royal Air Force fighter-bombers (nicknamed *Jabos* by the Germans) from breaking up his offensive. German forecasters predicted bad weather through mid December.

To Antwerp!

Dawn broke around 5:25 a.m. on December 16, announced by 1,600 German artillery pieces. Hard hitting 88mm guns, *Nebelwerfer* rocket artillery, mortars, and howitzers opened up on the US VIII Corps, taking the Americans completely by surprise. Rail-mounted 14 inch guns sent shells far to the American rear, searching out supply depots and headquarters. Shells cut telephone lines, leaving commanders in the dark about the developing crisis. Flights of Me 262 jet fighter-bombers screamed overhead, cheered by the assaulting troops. Searchlights shone on the clouds, creating a creepy artificial moonlight meant to unnerve the Americans as much as to help the Germans.

In the 6th SS Panzer Army area, Dietrich sent in *Volksgrenadiers*, troops from hastily assembled infantry divisions that used new tactics and weapons. Their mission was to take bridges needed for an armored advance. But one span was missing, destroyed by the Germans earlier that year. The bridging equipment necessary to replace it got tangled with infantry trucks and other materiel on the narrow roads, jamming them for most of the day.

This traffic jam irked Lieutenant Colonel Joachim Peiper, commanding *Kampfgruppe* ("Combat Group") Peiper—6,000 *Waffen*-SS ("Armed SS") men and their tanks and other armored and transport vehicles. Aside from the traffic jam, the route for

Peiper's advance was under heavy shellfire. Stuck until early the next morning, Peiper was furious.

The Germans had found that a notch through the ridgelines, the Losheim Gap, made a great funnel through the American lines. The gap was precisely on the boundary between Middleton's VIII Corps and Gerow's V Corps. Artillery and armored attacks eventually broke through the 600 dismounted cavalrymen defending the gap, flanking the US 106th Infantry Division, in the Schnee Eifel. Then Manteuffel sent troops pouring through another corridor, the Alf Creek valley at the Schnee Eifel's southern rim. Now flanked on both left *and* right, the 106th Golden Lions were at risk of being surrounded.

As the first day closed, two of the 106th's infantry regiments—the 422nd and the 423rd, about 6,000–10,000 officers and men—were about to be cut off in the Eifel. Major General Alan Jones, commanding the 106th, phoned Middleton from St. Vith, asking permission to withdraw his regiments from the closing snare. The phone connection was poor. Jones came away believing Middleton had *not* authorized a retreat when, in fact, he had. The regiments stayed put.

Despite successes, the Germans' Ardennes attack was already failing the test of speed. Roads sometimes proved impassable, and bridges too flimsy to support the weight of Panthers, much less Tiger II tanks. And sometimes the Americans surprised the Germans by standing and fighting, even if their divisions were crumbling and their chain of command was nearly shattered. On their own, soldiers decided to hold their ground, or to get payback for buddies lost.

Surprise at Headquarters

EISENHOWER AND BRADLEY WERE TALKING on the afternoon of the 16th when word arrived that the Germans were attacking at five points along the First Army's front. Bradley assumed it was a mere spoiling attack, a delaying tactic. Eisenhower grasped the seriousness of the threat. "This is no local attack, Brad," he said. "It isn't logical for the Germans to launch a local attack at our weakest point.... I don't think we can afford to sit on our hands till we've found out."

Bradley phoned Patton, ordering him to shift the 10th Armored Division 90 degrees north to attack the German advance. Bradley then phoned his own headquarters in Luxembourg City, which

Opposite: On December 17, first day of the Ardennes attack, a GI marches a German POW past a burning Panther tank. Hitler's blitz shocked the Yanks, but they fought back. Above: After defending the villages Krinkelt and Rocherath, the US 2nd Infantry Division massed guns on Elsenborn Ridge to rain shells on German forces. Part of that firepower, the 38th Field Artillery, here wheels into Elsenborn on the 20th.

relayed orders to the V Corps, to have the 7th Armored Division attack southward into the right flank of the German advance

When Bradley was done, Smith remarked, "Well Brad, you've been wishing for a counterattack Now it looks like you've got it."

Bradley said with a grim smile, "A counterattack yes, but I'll be damned if I wanted one this big!"

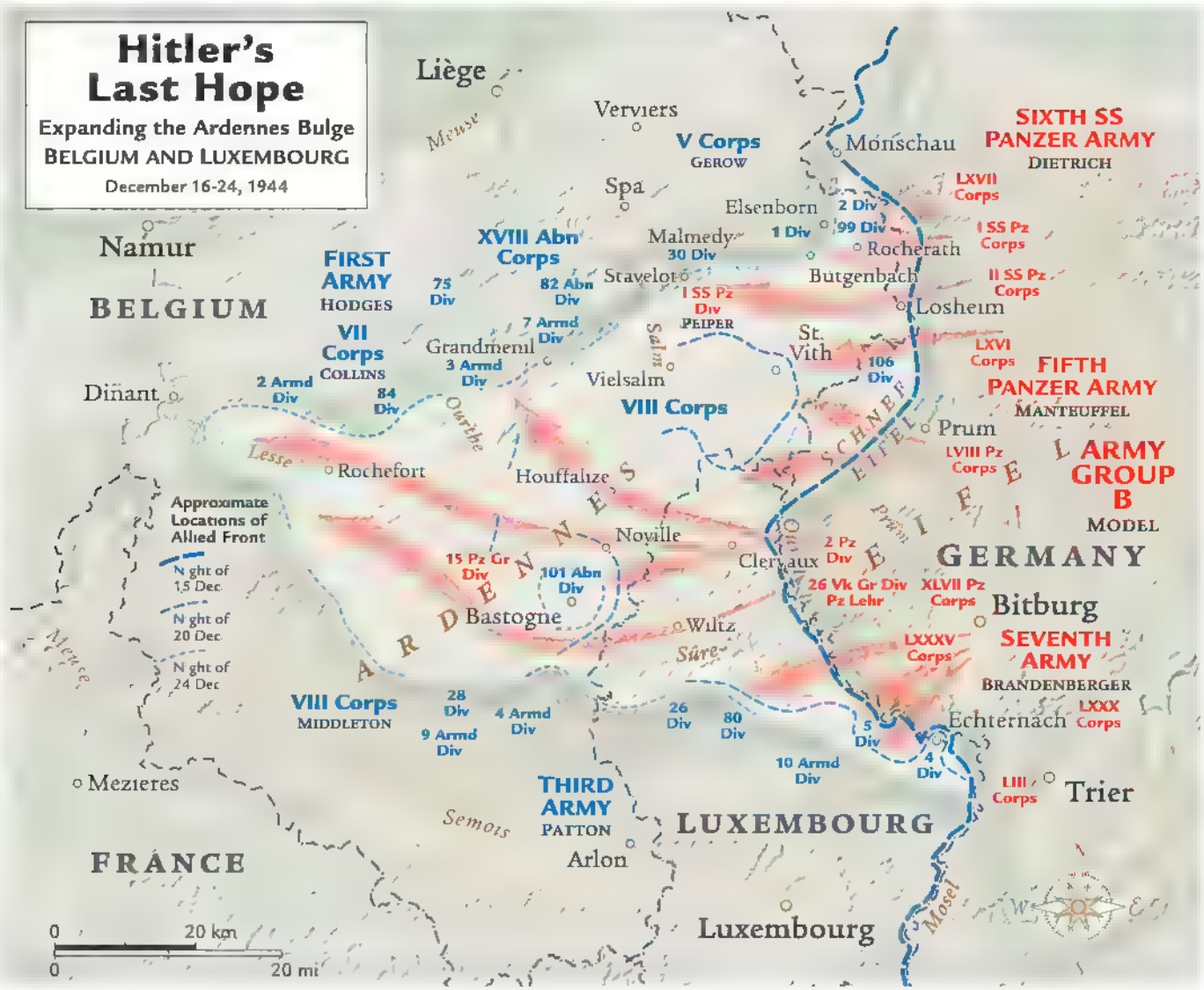
Eisenhower had only two experienced divisions in reserve in Europe: the 82nd and 101st Airborne. Both had fought in Operation Market Garden, a failed attempt to enter Germany through the Netherlands in September 1944. Battle weary, both divisions were near Reims, France, resting, refitting, and adding replacements to make up for casualties Having no other choice, Eisenhower committed them to the battle.

Springing to the Defense

BACK AT THE FRONT, the developing encirclement of two thirds of the 106th Infantry Division by Manteuffel and Dietrich set up a new threat: an attack on the road hub of St Vith. If Dietrich was to reach the Meuse River fast, he had to take the town. Occupying St. Vith would also ensure a safe line of supply as his Panzers advanced. To help prevent that, the US 7th Armored Division's Combat Command B arrived in St. Vith. Jones turned the defense over to the commander, Brigadier General Bruce C Clarke, who deployed elements of his command north, east, and south of the town.

The fate of St. Vith now depended on traffic. Behind US lines everywhere in the battle zone, reinforcements and fresh troops had to muscle their way past retreating vehicles and disorganized crowds of retreating men. On the German side, Dietrich faced similar trouble. Troops, engineers, and Panzer units interwove, competing for the same nasty, narrow roads leading to the front. Even so, Dietrich had the jump on the Americans.

Other Americans had sprung into action, however, and would soon be fighting to hold key points of strategic importance. Around midnight, as December 17 began, the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions were preparing to move. Officers and men scrounged equipment, weapons, shoes, socks, winter coats, rations, ammo—everything needed for combat. Newly arrived replacements even had to scrounge up helmets and M 1 rifles.



Sergeant William Dunfee of I Company, 505th Parachute Infantry, 82nd Airborne Division, remembered the scramble:

The night of December 17–18, 1944, sometime after lights out, we were awakened out of a doze by Lieutenant [Joseph] Vandevegt. We thought he was either drunk or had lost his mind He was sounding off about the Germans had broken through, and we were to move out before daylight. By the time we were fully awake, we realized he was neither drunk nor kidding.

We were up and dressed within half an hour. Everyone got their combat gear together including un-authorized ordnance, mine being a Colt .45 I kept near my heart in combat.... We were issued "K" rations for two days, one fragmentation grenade and a bandoleer of ammunition. We were assured we would get more before contacting the enemy. We had no mortar or machine gun ammo and a bandoleer wouldn't last a rifleman very long in a good fire-fight. We loaded into semi-trailers [open-air cattle trailers] and headed for Belgium. This was early morning of 18 December....

Within 24 hours, airborne infantry began manning a firing line built on the villages outside Bastogne.

Major General Maxwell Taylor, commander of the 101st Airborne Division, was in Washington, DC, when the alert was sounded. His top officers were in England lecturing on Market Garden. His executive officer had shot himself a week earlier. That left his artillery chief, Brigadier General Anthony McAuliffe, in command, which would turn out to be a lucky happenstance.

Peiper Rolls Forward

ON THE MORNING OF December 17, *Kampfgruppe* Peiper was finally on the move. Rolling into Honsfeld, Belgium, Peiper's men surprised sleeping Americans of Company B, 612th Tank Destroyer Battalion. The storm troopers rousted the GIs into the street and murdered eight of them. Five more Americans surrendered; four were murdered with a machine gun and the fifth, begging for his life, was thrown under the treads of a moving tank. After murdering four more GIs who were waving a white flag, Peiper's men rolled on for two miles into Bullingen and seized 50,000 gallons of gasoline for their thirsty Panzers. The *Kampfgruppe*'s day of rapid advances and shocking atrocities was just getting started.

AROUND 1 P.M., Peiper's battle group was nearing a crossroads called Baugnez to pick up the road to Ligneuville. The same road, in the opposite direction, led to a town called Malmedy. Coming down that road from Malmedy was Battery B, 285th Field Artillery Observation Battalion. The American convoy of 2.5-ton trucks, weapons carriers, and jeeps was en route to Luxembourg to join the 4th Infantry Division. The column began passing through the Baugnez crossroads just as *Kampfgruppe* Peiper arrived. Private Ted Paluch of the 285th recalled,

The spearhead of Model's offensive was *Kampfgruppe* Peiper. The SS unit had orders to pierce US lines, cross the Meuse River, and race to the port of Antwerp, Belgium. Traffic and resistance slowed the *Kampfgruppe* down, but didn't restrain it from committing horrific atrocities. This view at Baugnez, near Malmedy, shows the exhumed remains of GIs who were shot by the storm troopers after surrendering.

The lead vehicles in our convoy were fired on. The lead vehicles were way ahead of us and the Germans were still a good bit away from them, so when they were fired..., the lead vehicles had a chance to run and get out of there, which they did.

I saw [the Germans] coming and our column stopped. I jumped out of the truck and into a ditch full of icy cold water. All I could hear was firing. I popped my head up to see and all I could see was tracers, I never saw so many tracers in my life. I pulled my head back down as a tank rolled around the corner and came towards us. I could see that the men in the tank and the troops with them were SS troopers. They had the lightning bolts on their collars.

...All we had was carbines and here was this tank coming down the road right at us. As it got close to us it leveled its gun at the ditch and the tank commander told us to surrender. What were we

going to do? I threw my carbine down and threw my hands up.

Socks, gloves, and cigarettes, anything of value they took. The guys that captured us were young, they seemed like OK guys. They didn't mishandle us or rough us up, they simply took us prisoner, searched us and then moved on. The guys that captured us and the tanks that were with them stayed around for about ten minutes and then disappeared. We were standing there in the field with our hands up not knowing what was coming

The troops who captured the Americans departed with Peiper, allegedly waving and yelling. The POWs were guarded by a number of SS men, some in armored cars. The atmosphere was tense among the 90 helpless Americans and the German guards. A pistol shot rang out. Then the SS men opened up on the defenseless POWs with machine guns, submachine guns, and rifles. Paluch recalled,

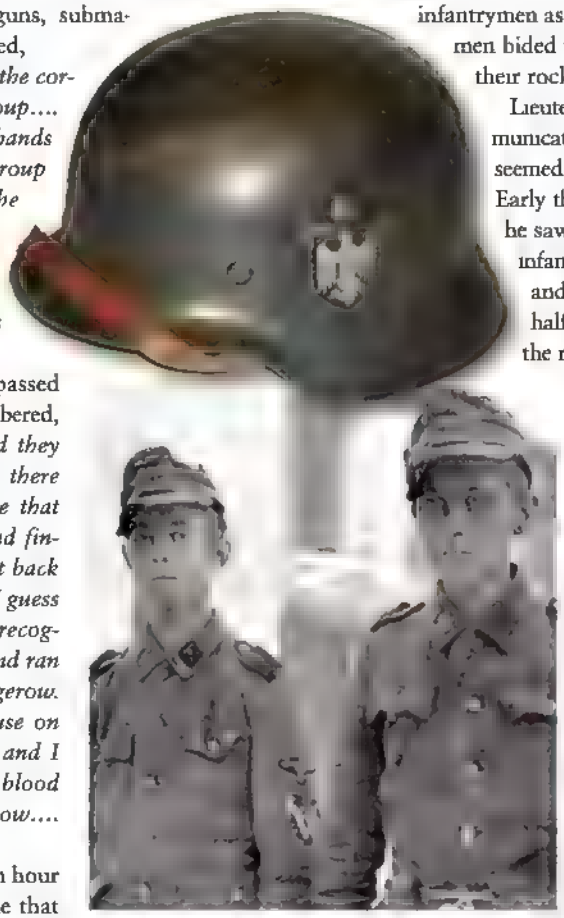
One of the vehicles came around the corner and started firing into our group.... We were standing there with our hands up and I was in the front of the group nearest the crossroads. As the German tanks passed they fired into the middle of the group of us, everybody started to drop and I dropped too. I got hit in the hand as I went down.

The rest of *Kampfgruppe* Peiper passed by the massacre scene. Paluch remembered,

After that as each vehicle passed they fired into the group of us laying there dead or dying in the field. Anyone that was moaning they came around and finished them off. After that they went back and took off. After laying there for I guess an hour or more I heard a voice I recognized yell, "Let's go!" so I got up and ran down a little road towards a hedgerow. The Germans came out of the house on the corner and took a shot at me and I dove into a hedgerow. I had some blood on me and I lay down in the hedgerow.... I just laid there...dead still.

After lying in the hedgerow for an hour or more, Paluch followed a rail line that took him to Malmedy and the American lines. In Malmedy, medics treated his wound, and intelligence men interrogated him. Within two weeks he was back in action.

Other survivors also reached US lines with stories of *Kampfgruppe* Peiper's unforgivable atrocity, and word spread with electric swiftness from foxhole to foxhole all over the Ardennes. Suddenly, every American dogface had a personal grudge against the SS. A lot of GIs figured that if the SS murdered American POWs, there was no reason to keep captured SS troopers alive.



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Yankee Rage at Krinkelt

DIETRICH, MEANWHILE, was running behind. The green but determined US 99th Division had given his 6th SS Panzer Army a rough time, delaying it only a few miles west of its jumping off point for two days before finally breaking under the pressure. Once free, Dietrich raced to attack the twin villages of Krinkelt and Rocherath with his 12th SS Panzer Division *Hitlerjugend* ("Hitler Youth").

A 2nd Division regiment defended the villages, augmented by refugees from the 99th. Krinkelt's stone houses made excellent fortresses, and the defenders shot down the 12th SS Panzer's infantrymen as they approached. In the town itself, bazooka men bided their time, letting Tigers pass and then firing their rockets into the iron giants' less-armored rears.

Lieutenant Jesse Morrow, with 1st Battalion communications, was upset that no one outside Krinkelt seemed to care about the 2nd Division's predicament. Early that morning, from behind an overturned jeep, he saw a Tiger heading his way with about a dozen infantry clinging to it. At 50 yards, he jumped out and sprayed the tank with his submachine gun. A half-dozen grenadiers dropped off the tank and the rest retreated posthaste.

Finding an M-1 Garand rifle, Morrow rigged a grenade onto its launcher and went after the Tiger, but he failed to kill it. The tank was slewing around to find its attacker when Morrow fired another grenade from just five yards. The tank slewed again and dropped into a ditch. Morrow fired again and hit its ammo rack. Black-clad crewmen bailed out, their clothes aflame.

BY LATER THAT DAY, Americans wielding bazookas, rifle grenades, and even Molotov cocktails had turned Krinkelt's streets into a Panzer graveyard. Morrow pried scared men out of hiding and made them join the defense. When he spotted a Tiger that had just squashed a jeep, he fired a bazooka at its rear. The tank hit a house and careened into a ditch. Morrow charged it, armed with just his Colt .45 automatic pistol. When the tank commander poked his head out of the turret hatch, Morrow fired his last two rounds at him, then threw the pistol for good measure.

Ducking into an alley, Morrow grabbed another bazooka. He aimed it at the tank as the tank aimed its 88mm gun tube at him.

Opposite: Infantry and tanks worked together effectively in the Bulge. Here, American foot soldiers ride armor into battle as they close in on a German-held Belgian town on December 27, regaining lost ground. Above: Hitler's bold attack in the Ardennes belied a grim reality. German military power was fading fast, bled away on two fronts. Teenagers were serving as frontline troops, like these two from the 12th SS Panzer Division "Hitler Youth," captured on Elsenborn Ridge. Top: Most men who wore the *Stahlhelm*, Germany's distinctive steel helmet, were ordinary soldiers, not hardcore Nazis. They became pawns in Hitler's Ardennes gamble.

He thought he saw a round coming down the 88's barrel just as he fired his rocket. Medics were awestruck by his being grazed by an 88 and living to tell about it.

Morrow was alive, but weak from blood loss. That's why as he was riding in the ambulance to the field hospital, he failed to strangle the German in the next stretcher who asked, "Do you haff a zigarette?" Morrow passed out trying to leap from his stretcher.

The defenders of Krinkelt and Rocherath withdrew on the 19th to Elsenborn Ridge, to the west. There they joined the 1st and 9th Divisions. They had some of the most massive artillery support seen in any WWII land battle in Europe: 16 division batteries, 7 corps batteries, 12 regiments of 105 howitzers each, and 348 other guns, including tanks and tank destroyers. These dropped a curtain of fire on the Germans

"I mean as soon as you are finished with us here."

Bradley asked, "How soon will you be able to attack, George?"

"In forty eight hours."

Eisenhower snapped, "Don't be fatuous, George."

Patton said "Never mind dates. I'll get there on time. Brad, this time the Kraut has stuck his head in the meat grinder. And this time I have got hold of the handle!"

Even as the generals conferred, tragedy was playing out in the Schnee Eifel. Stranded and surrounded, the officers and men of the 106th Division's 422nd and 423rd Regiments suffered under enemy mortar and artillery fire. One battalion commander was mortally wounded. Attempts to break out to the west toward Schönberg, Belgium, near St. Vith, were bloody failures.

The 422nd's commander, Colonel George L. Descheneaux,

Setback as Opportunity

EISENHOWER ENTERED the Caserne Maginot (Maginot barracks) in Verdun, France, late on the morning of the 19th. Waiting there were Patton, Bradley, and Lieutenant General Jacob L. Devers, commander of the Sixth Army Group. Eisenhower set the meeting's tone: "The present situation is to be regarded as one of opportunity for us, and not of disaster. There will only be cheerful faces at this conference table."

Patton spoke up. "Hell," he said, "let's have the guts to let the sons of bitches go all the way to Paris! Then we'll really cut 'em off and chew 'em up!"

Eisenhower answered, "No, the enemy will never be permitted to cross the Meuse.... George I want you to go to Luxembourg and take charge. When can you start up there?"

"Now!" Patton said.

"You mean today?"

came to the conclusion that his men were being shot like fish in a barrel. He ordered surrender. "As far as I'm concerned," he told his artillery commander, "I'm going to save the lives of as many as I can. And I don't give a damn if I'm court martialed." He ordered the regiment to destroy its weapons. The men obeyed, if resentfully. At 4 P.M. Colonel Charles Cavender also gave up his 423rd. The double surrender was the second largest in US history (Bataan, in the Philippines in April 1942, was the largest). An estimated 8,000 to 9,000 men were taken prisoner and consigned to a brief but hard captivity

At noon, US 30th Division troops retook a town called Stavelot, which Peiper's storm troopers had taken the day before. A small SS detachment left to hold the village was easily driven away. Peiper's foray into the Ardennes had been but a dagger-thrust that took only a narrow corridor of real estate. With the loss of Stavelot, the US Army now stood between him and resup-

ply. *Kampfgruppe* Peiper was cut off.

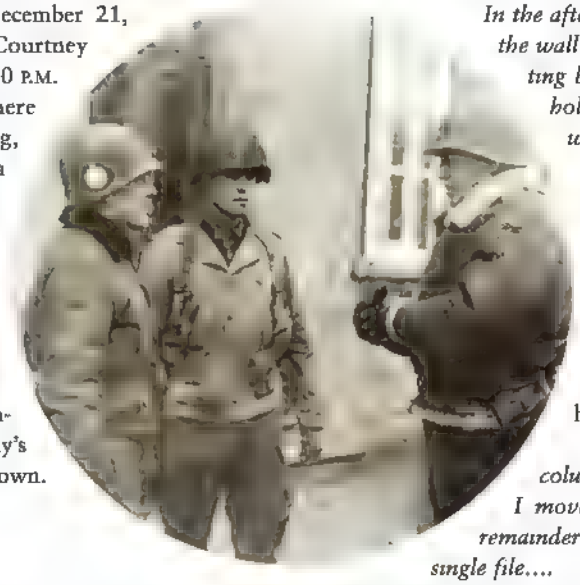
Outside St. Vith, Clarke's armored Combat Command B was deploying in defensive positions. Dietrich would have a hard time taking his second day objective.

That evening, Eisenhower mulled the situation in the Ardennes. Bradley, in Luxembourg, was out of regular communication with his First Army. There were reports of varying reliability on the fates of St. Vith, Wiltz (in Luxembourg), and Bastogne.

COORDINATION BETWEEN the northern and southern halves of the battlefield was impossible for one commander. Eisenhower drew a line through a map of the Ardennes. South of that line, Bradley was in charge. North of the line, someone of equal stature—an army group commander—was needed. That meant British Field Marshall Bernard Law Montgomery, commander of the 21st Army Group. Monty's abilities as a commander were unquestionable, but he was also, with the possible exception of Patton, the European theater's biggest prima donna.

At Chaudfontaine, Belgium, on December 21, First Army commander General Courtney Hodges welcomed Montgomery at 1:30 P.M. Entering the conference room where Hodges and his staff were waiting, Montgomery said, "I understand that a difficult situation has arisen. Now do tell me the form." Reviewing the situation, he said, "The first thing we must do is tidy up the battlefield."

Major General Matthew B. Ridgway's XVIII Airborne Corps was already en route to relieve the city Hodges proposed that there be no withdrawal from St. Vith, that Ridgway's corps continue its race to relieve the town. Eventually, Montgomery agreed.



No Clear Lines

ON THE MORNING OF DECEMBER 21, General Clarke was under arrest. MPs stopped his jeep and asked him what league the Chicago Cubs played in. Clarke guessed "the American League" and was promptly locked up in a nearby building (temporarily). Clearly, Colonel Otto Skorzeny's handful of German commandos in GI uniforms had done a splendid job spreading terror and confusion among the Americans. Everywhere on the battlefront, edgy GIs quizzed other edgy GIs on their knowledge of baseball, swing music, and the movies

At La Gleize, Belgium, *Kampfgruppe* Peiper had reached the end of its run. This was as far as the storm troopers' gasoline would take them, after being cut off at Stavelot. Hemmed in by US forces, Peiper held on with a force that had been whittled down from 6,000 to just less than 950.

Lines remained fluid. Major Hal McCown of the 30th Division's 119th Infantry learned this the hard way when he was captured just after inspecting his own lines. He later reported,

...In La Gleize I was taken to the cellar containing the commander...Lieutenant Colonel Joachim Peiper.... The Colonel spent a few minutes trying to get tactical information from me but seeing the attempt worthless, sent me away again.... I did my best to determine the objectives of this unit and gained from several sources among the German Officers and men that this Division would be the first element in Liege and Maastricht....

During the night of 21 December at approximately 2300 hours I was again taken to the cellar Headquarters of Colonel Peiper.... He and I talked together from 2300 hours until 0500 hours...our subject being mainly his defense of Nazism and why Germany was fighting....

I was taken back the morning of 22 December and again placed in the small cellar with the four other American Officers. All that day American artillery pounded the town incessantly....

In the afternoon a 105 shell made a direct hit on the wall of our cellar throwing the German sitting beside me half-way across the room. A hole approximately 2.5 feet in diameter was knocked in the wall.... Another shell landed a few feet outside the hole in the cellar wall and shrapnel and stone flew through the room. Lieutenant George Hendley was killed instantly and three Germans were wounded....

Surrounded and under heavy attack, Peiper decided on December 23 to withdraw back to the German lines, leaving his vehicles behind. McCown continued,

At 0300 hours 24 December the foot column began to move. Colonel Peiper and I moved immediately behind the point, the remainder of his depleted regiment following in single file....

At 0500 hours we heard the first tank blow up and inside of thirty minutes the entire area formerly occupied by Colonel Peiper's command was a sea of fiercely burning vehicles....

Embattled at Bastogne

BASTOGNE WAS SURROUNDED. The 101st Airborne men took this in stride. They were trained to operate behind enemy lines. Encircled and outnumbered, these men who would become known as the Battered Bastards of Bastogne took a pounding but repelled assault after assault by white-clothed Germans advancing over the snow.

On the morning of the 22nd, members of the 327th Glider Infantry Regiment, in a pine woods southwest of Bastogne, sighted Germans heading in their direction under a white flag. Four

Opposite: 504th Parachute Infantrymen follow a firebreak to Herresbach, Belgium, northeast of St. Vith. Above: In Bastogne, Lieutenant General George Patton (right, sporting a I Armored Corps patch) chats with Brigadier General Anthony McAuliffe (left) and Lieutenant Colonel Steve Chappuis (center) after awarding each a Distinguished Service Cross. McAuliffe led the 101st Airborne's defense of Bastogne. Chappuis, the 502nd Parachute Infantry commander, repelled a fierce Christmas attack, pressing cooks and drivers into combat.

The Cobra King broke through at Bastogne, crewed by First Lieutenant Charles Boggess, commander; Private Hubert Smith, driver; Corporal Milton Dickerman, gunner; Private Harold Hafner, machine-gunner; and Private James Murphy, loader. It is unknown who is who in the photo.

Germans were allowed to approach. The leader, a captain, announced to an American officer, "We are *parlementaires* and we want to talk to your officers." They presented the Americans with two typewritten sheets—one was in German and the other was its translation into English. A half hour later, acting division commander McAuliffe read the papers. They said,

To the U.S.A. Commander of the encircled town of Bastogne. The fortune of war is changing. This time the U.S.A. forces in and near Bastogne have been encircled by strong German armored units. More German armored units have crossed the river Ourthe near Ortheuville, have taken Marche and reached St. Hubert by passing through Hompre-Sibret-Tillet.

Libramont is in German hands. There is only one possibility to save the encircled U.S.A troops from total annihilation: that is the honorable surrender of the encircled town. In order to think it over a term of two hours will be granted beginning with the presentation of this note. If this proposal should be rejected one German Artillery Corps and six heavy A.A. [Anti-Aircraft] Battalions are ready to annihilate the U.S.A. troops in and near Bastogne. The order for firing will be given immediately after this two hours' term. All the serious civilian losses caused by this artillery fire would not correspond with the wellknown American humanity.

An artillery *corps?* McAuliffe's BS detector was ringing away. He tossed away the papers, saying, "Aw, nuts." It then occurred to McAuliffe that he needed to give an official reply. A staff officer suggested he write down his first reaction. He did, and he had Colonel Joseph Harper carry it back to the *parlementaires*.

"*Nusse?* Nuts? But what does it mean?" the English-speaking officer asked Harper as they returned to the front line.

"It means 'Go to Hell,'" Harper replied with some heat. "We'll kill every goddamn German that tries to break into this city!"

THE BATTERED BASTARDS hung on, waiting for clear weather. At last, on December 23, skies were a cold, brilliant blue. Just before noon the first C-47 transport planes appeared overhead and chutes began to blossom behind 240 C-47s. They dropped K rations, 2,300 grenades, a dozen boxes of morphine ampules, 1,500 bandages, 300 units of plasma, and 5,000 artillery rounds. Watching over the drop were scores of P 47 Thunderbolt fighters. When the drop was over, the Thunderbolts pounced on German positions with high explosives and napalm.

Nevertheless, by day's end the Germans had pummeled Bastogne's defenses, leaving the 101st in a somber mood. Another airdrop and more close support cheered the GIs on Christmas Eve. But that night two *Luftwaffe* air raids targeted Bastogne, one hitting an aid station and killing a beautiful young civilian girl who

had been nursing wounded Americans.

Enter Lieutenant Colonel Creighton Abrams, commander of the 37th Tank Battalion of Patton's 4th Armored Division. The day after Christmas, he was on a hill near Bastogne, watching C-47s make another cargo drop through German flak. He phoned Major General Hugh Gaffey, 4th Armored Division commander, asking permission to break through to Bastogne.

Gaffey called Patton. "Will you authorize a breakthrough to Bastogne?" he asked.

Patton replied, "I sure as hell will!"

Abrams got the word at 3 P.M. and ordered "Let 'er roll!" His

The 30th Infantry Division ejected *Kampfgruppe* Peiper guards from Stavelot on December 19. On the 21st, the division's 117th Infantry mopped up. These GIs are going after enemy snipers. The Bulge cleanup would continue until the Americans were back on Germany's border.

battalion pitched into the town of Assenois, led by Lieutenant Charles Boggess with nine four-ton M4A3E2 Sherman Jumbo assault tanks. Artillery pounded the enemy as Boggess's tanks rolled down the streets, all guns firing.

North of Assenois, Boggess's tanks took out a German blockhouse. Rolling on, they found fields and trees draped in parachutes. Beyond that were foxholes. Boggess's men held their fire. A soldier walked out from the line ahead, looked up at Boggess in his tank, *Cobra King*, and said, "I'm Lieutenant Webster of the 326th Engineers, 101st Airborne Division. Glad to see you." The siege was lifted. The men of Bastogne had held.

So had the men on Elsenborn Ridge. Montgomery was not disappointed by the performance of the Americans on this untidy battlefield. Though St. Vith fell, the garrison made it safely to friendly lines.

The Germans had used up time and precious fuel at St. Vith, at Bastogne, and at scores of strongpoints through the Ardennes. The American rear echelon's supply sergeants, cooks, clerks, bakers, and drivers had all turned to with rifles and fought as hard as any line infantry to slow and stop the Germans.

The enemy offensive literally ran out of gas just shy of the Meuse, and a crossing would have been doubtful anyway. Montgomery had put heavy US and British forces on the other side. Now they launched counterattacks that by January 24 would reduce the bulge in the American line back to its December 16 starting points.

The Americans lost about 69,500 men: 19,000 killed, 47,000 wounded, and 23,000 missing in action or captured. The Germans lost as many as 100,000 killed, captured, missing, and wounded. They lost 600 tanks and assault guns they could ill afford to lose. Three thousand civilians, mostly Belgians, were killed.

Peiper was condemned to death for his *Kampfgruppe*'s atrocities, but his sentence was commuted. He exiled himself to Traves, France, where, in 1976, persons unknown attacked his home with rifles, pistols, and Molotov cocktails. He was found the next day, a scorched corpse.

The Battle of the Bulge remains the largest battle ever fought by the US Army. And despite the devastating initial surprise, the army did keep the Germans from the Meuse. It held on, smothering the German offensive and grinding down the salient. The Bulge was the US Army's greatest victory. ★

BRIAN JOHN MURPHY *of Fairfield, Connecticut, is a contributing editor of* America in WWII *and writes frequently for the magazine.*

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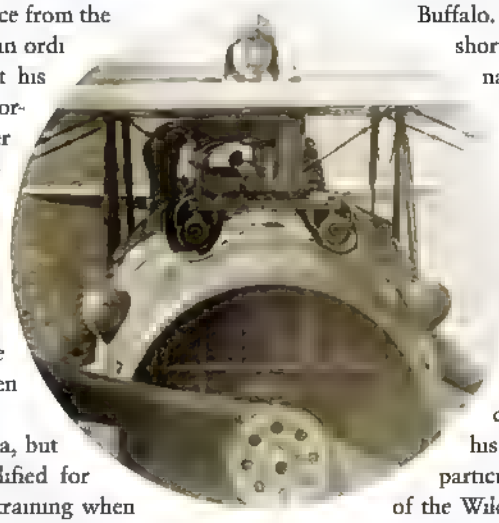
BRED TO BE AN Ace

Hamilton McWhorter grew up with hair-raising stories about World War One dogfighters. Then came World War Two...

by Robert F. Dorr

Lieutenant Hamilton "Mac" McWhorter spent the early part of his WWII navy flying career in fighters that were being handed their lunch by Japan's vaunted Mitsubishi A6M "Zero." He was the right pilot with the right stuff, but he lacked the right plane. Then came the Grumman Hellcat. "It was a long time before I saw one of them," McWhorter said. "When I did, I knew that aircraft and I were made for each other."

McWhorter seemed destined to be an ace from the start. Born on February 8, 1921, he had an ordinary upbringing in Athens, Georgia, but his middle-class father loved aviation. McWhorter was all of nine years old when his father arranged for his first flight, in a Ford Tri-Motor. Not long afterward, the young McWhorter found himself spellbound by a pair of navy fighters at an open house. "I'd read many of the stories of the aces of the Great War," he said. "I knew about the Red Baron. I knew about Eddie Rickenbacker. Probably even before I even saw a fighter plane, I wanted to fly one."



McWhorter attended college in Georgia, but he left his studies behind after he qualified for naval aviator training. He was in flight training when the Pearl Harbor attack came. When he finished, his first fighter was the Brewster F2A Buffalo, resembling a fire hydrant with wings, the product of a badly managed plane-making company in sharp decline.

The few Buffalos in the June 1942 Battle of Midway were outclassed by the Zero, but their US Marine Corps pilots fought valiantly. McWhorter found himself hoping he would never go into harm's way "in a fighter that was completely inadequate." After Midway, no American did.

While still stateside, McWhorter made the transition to the Grumman F4F 4 Wildcat as a member of Fighting Nine—squadron VF 9. The portly Wildcat bore the brunt of early fighting in the Battles of Wake Island (December 1941), the Coral Sea (May 1942), and Midway, but McWhorter still hadn't found his plane.

The Wildcat was an improvement over the hapless Buffalo. But, as McWhorter soon discovered, it had shortcomings, on land and in the air. On land, the narrowness of its landing gear made it difficult to handle when taxiing. In the air, it wasn't maneuverable enough in simulated air-to-air combat. "You caught a violent draft if you flew it with the cockpit open," McWhorter said. "And you had no provision for jettisoning that canopy in an emergency." Then there was the poor visibility. "The pilot's seat was too low," McWhorter complained. "It was not uncommon for a guy to sit on an extra parachute or even a telephone book in order to get his head to the proper height in the airplane." A particularly maddening problem was the tendency of the Wildcat's .50-caliber Browning M2 guns to jam for no apparent reason.

McWhorter fully expected to go to the Pacific when VF-9 embarked on the carrier USS *Ranger (CV 4)* in late 1942. To his surprise, he learned that he would see his first combat in Operation Torch, the Western Allies' invasion of North Africa in November 1942.

Instead of coming nose to nose with the Zero, McWhorter

OPPOSITE: US NAVY COURTESY OF ROBERT F. DORR. RIGHT: NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Opposite: Ten Rising Suns decorate Commander Hamilton "Mac" McWhorter's F6F-3 Hellcat fighter. *Five* meant five Japanese planes shot down. Getting those made McWhorter an ace—the *first* Hellcat ace. *Ten* flags made him a double ace. He would add two more before the war ended. Above: As a kid, McWhorter found inspiration in stories of WWI aces such as Eddie Rickenbacker, shown in his Spad S.XIII.

encountered Vichy French fighters—at a distance, and he never had a chance to test his Wildcat against them. He strafed military installations around Casablanca, while thinking of the recently released Humphrey Bogart movie. Other Wildcat pilots in Fighting Nine claimed a handful of aerial victories against Vichy French airmen at the controls of obsolete Curtiss Hawk 75s (known as P-36s when in US service).

AFTER VF 9 RETURNED from North Africa, it was based at Naval Air Station Oceana near Norfolk, Virginia. There, it was scheduled for a January 1943 upgrade to the new gull wing F4U Corsair. But the Corsair was encountering technical glitches with its shipboard operations. So Fighting Nine took delivery of Grumman F6F-3 Hellcats. It was the first squadron to do so.

Grumman was manufacturing Hellcats at a furious rate—it built 12,275 between June 1942 and November 1945, the largest number of fighters ever produced at a single factory—but the navy was slow in making deliveries. Blue Hellcats were lined up at the Bethpage assembly plant on Long Island all the way to the horizon and beyond, but only half a dozen planes per week were being delivered.

"When I got mine it had what we would today call 'that new car smell,'" McWhorter said. "We received these new fighters so early they didn't yet have a pilot's operating manual to give us. We used mimeographed sheets."

McWhorter almost couldn't believe how formidable his new plane was. Compared to the Wildcat, the Hellcat offered a spacious and comfortable cockpit, 60 miles per hour greater airspeed, a faster rate of climb, and more ammunition capacity.

The Hellcat was built around the 2,000-horsepower Pratt and Whitney R-2800-10W Double Wasp 18-cylinder radial piston engine, driving a three-bladed, constant-speed propeller. It was a heavyweight at 15,413 pounds, more than twice the heft of the Zero's 6,945 pounds. It had six .50-caliber M2s with 400 rounds per gun.

"It was sturdy enough to survive against Japanese fighters armed with larger-bore cannons," said McWhorter, "and it had a better rate of climb and higher speed. It took off like it was homesick for that little cloud up there. Think about the simple act of getting into the air. The Wildcat had to be begged and coaxed during takeoffs. The Hellcat was solid, steady, and easy to keep straight going down the runway." McWhorter had found his plane.

One of the few pilots going into the new fighter with actual combat experience under his belt, McWhorter found the Hellcat to be uncommonly stable and "a beautiful gun platform." His practice gunnery scores went up immediately. He found the Hellcat more maneuverable than the Wildcat, too. "It probably had the biggest wing area of any American fighter," he said. "It would darn near land itself on the carrier without any help from the pilot."

In February 1943, McWhorter and his fellow VF-9 members went aboard the USS *Essex (CV 9)*, the first of a new class of fast carriers that would dominate the rest of the Pacific war. The ship cast off at Norfolk in May and went through the Panama Canal. Her first combat in the Pacific was a strike on Japanese-held Wake Island on October 5, 1943.

What happened at Wake made it clear to McWhorter that the days of American fighter pilots being humiliated by Japanese Zeros had ended. "My squadron commander, Commander Phil Torrey, maneuvered behind a Zero and shot him down," McWhorter said. "The skipper said no one would ever again talk about the Zero being superior."

McWhorter had a similar experience. "I dived into a formation of Zeros, lined up one in my gunsight, and fired a short burst," he said. "Although they would later label me One Slug McWhorter because they said I was very frugal with the taxpayers' .50-caliber bullets, the real reason I didn't fire a second burst was that the Zero exploded in front of me. I'd scored my first air-to-air kill. I was told that at Wake we shot down 22 Japanese aircraft while losing six in air-to-air battle."

McWhorter and his fellow VF 9 Hellcat pilots would have plenty more opportunities to prove their mettle. The next stop in their Pacific journey came at Rabaul, at the island of New Britain, in what was then Australia's territory of New Guinea. The massive Japanese fortress at Rabaul was kept under siege by the Western Allies through the entire war.

On November 11, 1943, McWhorter and his shipmates flew their new Hellcats to escort new Curtiss SB2C Helldiver dive-bombers in an *Essex*-launched strike on Rabaul's harbor. McWhorter knew that warships from Rabaul could threaten US troops on nearby Bougainville. "We were apprehensive," he said. "We were launched from 150 miles southeast of Rabaul, escorting our task force's Helldiver dive bombers and TBF Avenger torpedo bombers. We started toward Rabaul flying the standard cover, with the bombers in a box formation and us about 1,000 feet above them. The clouds topped at 10,000 feet, so we stayed above them. It would have been a beautiful experience in that high blue sky if the situation hadn't been so serious. We were approaching from 50 miles out when a dozen or so Zeros showed up. We got through that first batch of Zeros. My two kills that

LEFT & OPPOSITE: US NAVY COURTESY OF ROBERT F. DORR

Above: Sailors aboard the USS *Essex (CV-9)* fold the wings of a Hellcat from McWhorter's squadron, VF-9, for storage until the next mission. McWhorter had worried that he'd be assigned one of the war's early-model carrier planes, such as the balky Brewster Buffalo. But after brief service flying the F4F-4 Wildcat, VF-9 received F6F-3 Hellcats. McWhorter had found his plane, and he quickly became an ace. Opposite: Reading the deck crew's hand signals and mission slate, a Hellcat pilot prepares to take off from a US carrier in the Pacific.

BRED TO BE AN Ace

by Robert F. Dorr

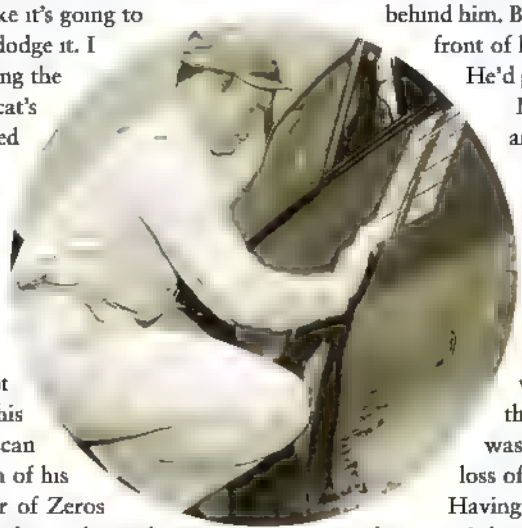
day came later, after I encountered what seemed to me the Imperial Japanese Navy."

Arriving over Rabaul, McWhorter looked down at long white streaks: the wakes of Japanese warships making speed out of Rabaul harbor in a column. Torrey gave the order to attack, and the Hellcats rolled in to dive at the ships, intending to strafe them ahead of the Avengers.

McWhorter leveled off at wave-cap altitude, following his own shadow. He was flying straight into a flotilla of Japanese cruisers and destroyers. He looked into his gunsight and maneuvered so that he was approaching the largest warship in front of him, which may have been the light cruiser *Kiso*. Every one of the ships was firing at the swarm of American carrier planes over Rabaul, but most didn't seem to see McWhorter's Hellcat skimming the waves.

"I can testify that you can actually see an eight inch shell coming in your direction when a warship opens up with its heavy artillery," McWhorter said. "If it looks like it's going to hit you, you might actually have time to dodge it. I could also see my .50-caliber rounds hitting the Jap ship." (Every fifth round in the Hellcat's ammunition belts was a tracer that glowed like a firefly hurtling through the air.)

After watching sailors on deck scramble for cover as he poured bursts into the cruiser, McWhorter pulled up and was instantly drawn into a "fur ball" (aviator slang for a huge, close-quarters dogfight). That's when he made a mistake, the biggest mistake a fighter pilot could make. He allowed the foe to get on his tail. Then he heard a metallic clanging: cannon shells ripping into the thin metal skin of his plane. He looked around and saw a pair of Zeros locked in on his six o'clock position, right on his tail. Most of the cannon shells were flying past him—fiery red balls, most missing him by only feet. "I spent a little time kicking myself for getting sandbagged and a long split-second deciding how to get out of there."



McWHORTER HAD NEVER HAD an enemy fighter on his tail before, but he knew it wasn't supposed to work this way, "not if you wanted to come out alive," he said. He applied stick and rudder to throw his Hellcat into a violent turn, slipped away from the Japanese fighters, and turned to engage one of them. In a corner of his vision he saw a Hellcat tumbling, wing over wing, shedding fragments of steel. McWhorter was certain he was watching a fellow VF-9 pilot go down. It turned out to be Ensign Bob Capp, who failed to return to *Essex* that day.

More than 100 Zeros had engaged 50 Hellcats high over Rabaul's vast natural harbor. Now one crossed McWhorter's flight path at a distance of about 1,000 feet, crossing from the bottom of his windshield to the top. McWhorter was perfectly set up for an overhead, 90-degree deflection shot—not an easy shot to make. "I fired a short burst and got hits all along his fuselage," he said. "Suddenly, we were converging far too rapidly. He had inexplicably turned in my direction. On the verge of a mid-air collision, I had to pull up slightly to go over top of the Zero. As I did, I looked right down into his cockpit."

It was shocking to be almost face to face with a Japanese pilot. McWhorter was reminded that the Zero, unlike the Hellcat, had no armor plate protecting its cockpit. "I saw flames coming out from under the instrument panel inside the Zero's cockpit." The Japanese pilot was wearing no oxygen mask, and his face was frozen. The image would remain in McWhorter's memory long after the Zero exploded.

McWhorter started after another Zero, and a loud noise shook his plane. He looked around and, again, a pair of Zeros was right behind him. But there was also a Zero, again, crossing in front of him. McWhorter fired. The Zero blew up. He'd gotten his second and third aerial victories.

McWhorter made his way out of the fight and recovered aboard *Essex*. There were bullet holes in each wing of his Hellcat and on both sides of the fuselage. They weren't from cannons. They were from machine guns, which the Zero also carried. Ironically, McWhorter was certain that the Zero that shot him up had blocked the path of another Zero, preventing it from shooting him down. On that Rabaul strike, McWhorter's squadron was credited with downing 14 Zeros with a loss of one Hellcat pilot.

Having demonstrated that they could survive on the enemy's home turf, *Essex* and her air group went next to Tarawa Atoll in the Gilbert Islands. The job there was to provide air cover for one of the war's hardest fought amphibious invasions. On November 18, 1943, two days before marines went ashore on the atoll's Betio Pier, McWhorter shot down a Mitsubishi F1M "Pete" floatplane near Tarawa. The next day, McWhorter bagged a Mitsubishi G4M "Betty" twin-engine bomber, and again he had been frugal with his ammunition, using just 86 rounds. This fifth victory made McWhorter an ace—the navy's *first* ace to rack up all his kills in the Hellcat.

After a brief respite, Fighting Nine was back in battle on January 29, 1944, when fast carriers supported the invasion of Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands. McWhorter was part of a Hellcat formation that strafed the Japanese airfield at Roi inlet, led by Lieutenant Commander Herb Houck. McWhorter shot down two Zeros that day, got another kill a few days later, and shot down two more Zeros on February 19, 1944. He was now the first Hellcat pilot to be rated a double ace, with 10 aerial victories.

LEFT & OPPOSITE: US NAVY PHOTO, NATIONAL ARCHIVES

McWhorter applies the 10th Rising Sun to his Hellcat. The photo's original navy caption says, "He shot down three at Truk, one at Wake, two at Rabaul, two at Tarawa, two at Roi-Namur." He would claim his final two victories flying an F6F-5 Hellcat with squadron VF-12.

VF-9 filled its scoreboard during its service aboard *Essex*, and McWhorter (far right) did his part. Here, early in 1944, at the end of VF-9's service, the tally is 106 Japanese kills and 6 Vichy French kills scored, the latter while flying from USS *Ranger (CV-4)* off North Africa.

McWhorter went home from the war after VF 9 completed its combat service in March 1944, but he was back in action a year later with Fighting Twelve, or VF-12, aboard the USS *Randolph (CV 15)*. Now he was piloting the model F6F-5 Hellcat, with a more powerful version of the R 2800 engine and other improvements over his earlier F6F-3. When VF-12 joined the Pacific war, the fast carrier force was taking the war to the Japanese home islands. On February 16, 1945, McWhorter claimed his 11th aerial victory, another Zero.

MUCH OF THE REMAINDER of McWhorter's war consisted of strafing airfields on the Japanese home islands. On May 13, 1945, a Nakajima C6N Saiun, or "Myrt," reconnaissance aircraft passed over the carrier force at 25,000 feet. McWhorter was in one of the Hellcats prowling on combat air patrol overhead. He shot down the Myrt, but pieces of the falling Japanese plane struck another Hellcat and knocked it out of the sky. McWhorter and his shipmates spent the rest of the day managing the rescue of the downed American. It was the last of McWhorter's 89 combat missions.

One of America's best known aces, McWhorter co-authored *The First Hellcat Ace* (2000) with Jay A. Stout and shared his experiences in *Air Combat* (2006) by Robert F. Dorr. Both books are now out of print. He appeared on the History Channel and often attended reunions and events promoting naval aviation. McWhorter died at El Cajon, California on April 12, 2008, survived by his wife, the former Louise Edel, whom he'd married in 1943. ☆

ROBERT F. DORR, *a US Air Force veteran who lives in Virginia, is a frequent contributor to* America in WWII. *He has written dozens of books on military aviation.*

BAD NEWS BADLY

The author was home on leave after the invasion of Tarawa when a woman asked what he knew about her son, a fellow marine who went missing there.

by Nick Cariello

Men of the 2nd Marine Division advance under fire early in the November 20–23, 1943, Battle of Tarawa. The marines lost some 3,000 men killed and wounded in the fighting. About 90 were listed as missing.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

DELIVERED

BAD NEWS BADLY DELIVERED by Nick Cariello

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

WHEN I WAS A 21-YEAR-OLD MARINE, I was seriously wounded by a Japanese hand grenade on the first day of the brutal battle for Tarawa in the Central Pacific. Most people I've talked to haven't heard about Tarawa. One person believed it might be a rock group. Another thought it was an exotic foreign car. The November 1943 assault lasted only 76 hours, but the casualty figures were stunning. About 1,000 marines were killed and another 2,000 wounded. Only 17 Japanese soldiers from a garrison of about 4,800 survived.

After the battle, I spent two weeks in the Pearl Harbor naval hospital and then was taken by ship to the naval hospital in San Diego, arriving just two days before Christmas. My recovery was rapid, so in mid January 1944 I begged the doctors to grant me a medical leave. Before the Tarawa campaign, I had fought on Tulagi and Guadalcanal in the utterly hellish Solomon Islands, where the mosquitoes seemed as big as hummingbirds. I hadn't been home in more than two years. My doctors granted my wish.

I was both elated and anxious as I began the three-day train trip to my hometown of Racine, Wisconsin. For some puzzling reason I kept thinking about the Japanese soldier who had wounded me and others with that damned hand grenade. He was killed by other marines. He must have known that he was going to die. What were his last thoughts, of home and family? Was he an only child or did he have siblings? How old was he? My age? Was he outgoing or shy and introverted? Did he have a sense of humor? The Japanese enjoy baseball. Did he like the game as much as I do? Could we have gone to a night game together after enjoying a good dinner and sharing a beer or two?

Another thought kept me wondering about life, death, and the short distance between the two. About an hour before I was wounded, I had advanced with four others, ducking sniper bullets and sporadic machine-gun fire. Luckily we spotted a huge shell hole and jumped into it. Soon the opposing fire ceased and we tried to relax in the smothering heat, sipping precious water from our canteens. We talked about what to do next

Then a large Japanese mortar shell came winging in and landed near the top of the shell hole, about two feet from my left

OPPOSITE: COURTESY OF NICK CARIELLO

Above: Marines make the long wade to Tarawa's beach after the atoll's coral reef prevented their landing boats from approaching closer than 500 yards. The distance meant men in the first attack wave had to move slowly, without cover, under Japanese fire for a relatively long time. Opposite: Nick Cariello (far right) was wounded early in the battle. Recuperating later, he talked his doctors into sending him home on leave. Here he is with his younger brother Rudy, older brother Joe, and father Frank during that visit.

shoulder. I can still see those smoking yellow fins buried a few inches in the soil. My heart was pounding so hard that I had the silly thought it might break out of my rib cage.

Seconds dragged by, and then a minute or two. But the mortar didn't explode. It was a dud. I've often wondered why. Did some munitions worker in Japan, perhaps his mind a little numbed by a night of drinking sake, just forget to tighten a certain screw? Something apparently had gone wrong on that assembly line and I, along with those marines in the shell hole, were the beneficiaries. I yelled, "Holy sh—! How lucky can we get?" We cheered, laughed almost hysterically, as we pounded each other on the back.

THE TRAIN JOURNEY HOME was agonizingly slow and boring. Occasionally we'd get a layover of 20 minutes or so at a station. Soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen, and civilians would pile out of the train and dash for the nearest liquor store. One time I bought a bottle of Canadian Club, probably the most popular whiskey of the times, along with munchies such as potato chips and Baby Ruth candy bars.

I had befriended a pretty young woman from Milwaukee named Marie. I sought her out and told her that we were going to have a party. Soon we were sipping the heady booze far into the night. Thank goodness the train car was darkened as we engaged in "petting" or "necking," as it was called back then. Marie gave me her phone number and, with much emotion influenced by alcohol, made me promise over and over to call her while I was on leave. In a boozy haze I mumbled over and over, "Yes, yes, I will." But I never did. I don't know why not.

I FINALLY ARRIVED IN RACINE on a windy and snowy day. The reunion with my family was memorable and marked by many tears, backslaps, and kisses. My mother carefully checked me over with her sharp eyes, as mothers always seem to do. Then she and my proud and puffed-up father triumphantly led the almost delirious family into the spacious dining room.

My admiring two brothers and two sisters hovered nearby as we happily sat down to feast on one of Ma's famous spaghetti dinners with delectable meatballs and spicy sausages. Then came chicken cacciatore as a highlight. Robust red wine flowed heavily as we devoured the meal along with zesty cheeses and a cornucopia of fresh fruit followed by Italian liqueurs such as anisette and amaretto. Scrumptious cakes and pies brought over by neighbors topped off the gustatory evening.

TWO DAYS LATER THE PHONE RANG and I answered it. A nervous woman's voice said, "Is this the marine who was wounded at Tarawa?"

"Yes," I said. "Who is this, please?"

"I'm the mother of a marine who is still missing at Tarawa," came the reply. "I saw your name and picture-story in the paper. Would it be possible to talk to you about my son?"

"Sure," I said, and we arranged for her to come over that evening, despite the weather being snowy and blustery.

When the doorbell rang, my older sister, Mary, went to the door. She ushered in a diminutive woman, a blonde, perhaps in her early forties, and rather attractive. She stomped her feet and apologized for bringing snow into the house. She wore a completely black outfit—black dress, black coat, black purse, black stockings, black shoes, and a small black hat. I also saw that her eyes were puffed and red, apparently due to prolonged crying. The woman, obviously nervous, sat down across from me and explained that she was wearing black not only for her son, but also for her husband, who had died several months earlier.

My mother came into the room, solemnly shook hands with the woman, and then sat next to me on a couch. Mary preferred to stand. We made small talk for a few minutes about the weather and the forecast of really heavy snow for the next few days.

Then the woman looked at me directly and said, "My son was with the 8th Marine Regiment, and I was told that his unit landed on the second day under extremely heavy fire. Can you tell me anything about it?"

I felt a chill of horrible remembrance. As I was awaiting medical evacuation from Tarawa, I had watched from the beach as reinforcements from the 8th Marines waded waist-deep in the shallow lagoon as if in slow motion. Their Higgins boats had become hung up on the coral reefs, and the marines had to tumble desperately into the water. They were

COURTESY OF NICK CARIELLO

COURTESY OF NICK CARIELLO

While Cariello was home on leave, the mother of a fellow marine who'd gone missing at Tarawa stopped at the house one night to ask what he might know about her son. Their meeting was short. After she left, Cariello's older sister Mary (top, left, with his younger sister Esther) reproached him for how he handled the situation. His mother Domenica (above) cried more than talked, but agreed with Mary.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Though Cariello was wounded at Tarawa, he was lucky to get out alive. Many marines didn't. Here, the body of a marine is being carried from the beach to a grave weeks after the invasion. He likely had been listed as "missing" after the fight.

extremely easy targets for eager Japanese gunners, and dozens upon dozens of them were killed in the maelstrom. An occasional scream could be heard above the gunfire. I was horrified to see so many floating bodies. Others were half submerged and looked like big rag dolls. Numerous bloody bodies were piled up in twos and threes on the beach, and some looked strangely like driftwood.

The woman looked at me closely and then said softly, "Do you think there's any hope of my son still being alive?"

"No," I recall saying. "I'm sorry, but I really don't think there's any chance, just no chance."

The woman wore a distressed look on her face, and her eyes overflowed with tears as she twisted a handkerchief over and over. I looked quickly at my mother, who was quietly weeping. Mary stood silent with her chin quivering. The woman stood up rather shakily, thanking me solemnly as she shook my hand and left without another word. We were silent as her car drove off and the sound of the engine faded.

Then my always-outspoken sister, with a sharp edge in her voice, said, "Nick, I'm surprised, really surprised. You could have been more courteous. This poor woman has recently lost her husband and now apparently her son. Why couldn't you have been more gentle? Why?" My mother, still crying, strongly concurred.

"I suppose I could have," I said lamely. Well, I thought, at least I didn't tell her that the most likely scenario was that her boy's body had floated out to sea and had been devoured by sharks. But I do regret not saying something softer like, "Perhaps he's lying wounded in a hospital somewhere and has lost his dog tags and is suffering amnesia. Don't give up hope." Or, maybe, "He could have been wounded and floated to a nearby island and is being treated by friendly natives. You never know."

Neither is the best I could have said, perhaps, but at least better than a rather cold "Just no chance!" Some 70 years later, I'm left with a deep, indelible regret. ★

NICK CARIELLO *served in the US Marine Corps during World War II and later worked as a journalist for 30 years, 25 of them as news editor for his hometown newspaper in Racine, Wisconsin. He has written articles on the war for half a dozen magazines.*

Starring Jane Froman as...

The Survivor

As the USO plane prepared to land, a woman took Jane Froman's seat. Then the plane crashed. Froman lived. The woman did not. That was just the start.

by Patrice Crowley

JANE FROMAN WAS ON HER WAY to her first USO tour of the war. A quick "yes" had committed the lovely popular singer to a string of shows for GIs in England and North Africa. Now she was flying into Portugal on a plane full of fellow entertainers in February 1943.

As the Pan Am *Yankee Clipper* flying boat banked into its final turn before settling down on the Tagus River, the performers took their seats. But something went wrong. Suddenly, the plane crashed down in splinters, hurling its passengers into the deep water. At that terrible moment, Froman began a transformation from songbird to heroine—and icon of hope for wartime Americans living with hardship and grief.

Ellen Jane Froman was born on November 10, 1907, in University City, Missouri, near St. Louis. Her father was in the dry goods business and her mother was a music teacher and accomplished performer. By age three, Froman showed vocal talents and soon began playing piano by ear, and her mother became her teacher.

When Froman was five, her father left the family. He was never mentioned again, and photos of him disappeared from the house. Froman began stuttering, whether from the trauma of her father's disappearance, to echo her father's own speech defect, or from some other cause. No voice training improved it, and the stuttering remained with her all her life.

Struggling to make a living, Froman's mother moved with her to Clinton, Missouri, to live with her parents and siblings. Mother and daughter moved again in 1919 when Froman's mother got a job in the music department at Christian (now Columbia) College, a girls' school in Columbia, Missouri. In Columbia, the shy and solitary Froman began getting involved in ballet, theater, swimming, and singing in the church choir.

Singing was Froman's forte and the only time she didn't stutter. Yet when she graduated from Christian College in 1926 with an associate's degree, she enrolled not in music school but in the University of Missouri's journalism school. She loved to write and didn't mind being cast in the school's annual musical revue.

But singing at campus functions—and boys—kept her from her studies, and Froman flunked out. Her mother then enrolled her in the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, where she could focus on classical music. Classical training gave Froman the tonal quality, phrasing, and clear diction that would characterize her style. But it was pop music that brought her success, beginning with a job singing ad jingles at WLW in Cincinnati, called the Nation's Station for its far-reaching radio signal.

At WLW, Froman caught the attention of big band leader Paul Whiteman. She auditioned for him in July 1931, and he signed her to a five-year contract. But after just six months, Froman bought out her contract. Singing concerts with the band wasn't for her. Besides, radio gave her national exposure.

Refocused on radio, Froman's career took off. Fellow WLW singer Don Ross became her advisor and unofficial manager, impressing her with his show biz experience. He convinced her to move to a Chicago station and then to New York City to gain prominence. And although Ross was arrogant and jealous of Froman's career, the two married in 1933.

A role on CBS radio's *Chesterfield Hour* introduced Froman to more listeners. Fan magazines reported on her frequently, and in 1934 more than one national radio poll named her the top female singer, a spot she claimed again in 1937 and 1939. Soon she was the highest paid woman in radio.

Froman also sang on stage at Radio City, on Broadway, and as part of the *Ziegfeld Follies* of 1934. She worked with big stars such as Bing Crosby, Fanny Brice, Jimmy Durante, and Bob Hope.

LEFT & OPPOSITE: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Above: Jane Froman sings on NBC radio early in her career. She'd started out in radio at WLW in Cincinnati, where she'd met Paul Whiteman and got hired to sing in his big band. Opposite: Jane was a Broadway star before she appeared in the movie *Stars Over Broadway* in 1935. The musical numbers in the film featured James Melton (left), Froman, and Pat O'Brien.

BROADWAY
HOTEL

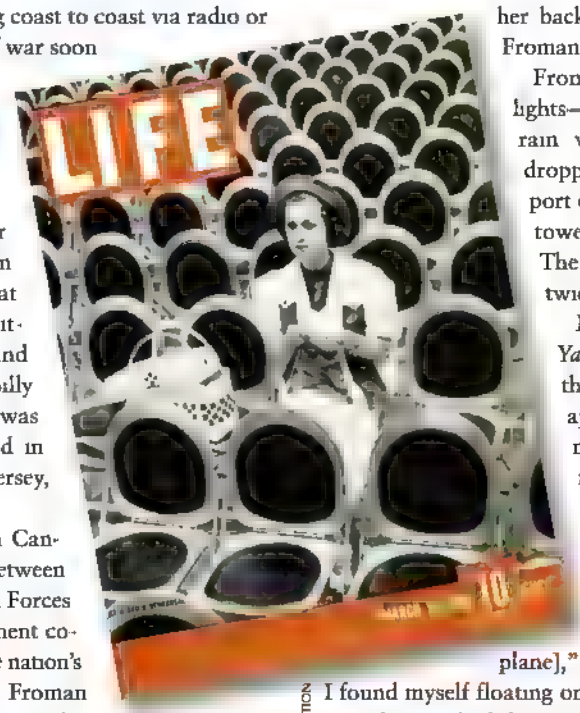
Starring Jane Froman as...The Survivor

by Patrice Crowley

She appeared at the country's best nightclubs, and cosmetics companies clamored to have her, a beautiful brunette, in their magazine ads. Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt invited her to sing at the White House

Life magazine put Froman on the cover on March 14, 1938. The story inside mentioned that Froman had reduced her stuttering and had been cast in Hollywood movies. On stage and on the air, she had always been introduced by someone else. The most she could say without stuttering was a sentence, and only if she phrased it rhythmically. Elocution teachers, drastic script edits, and lots of practice eventually got her minor musical roles in three full-length films. (The reviews were so-so, and at most she was mentioned for her singing, not acting.)

As the 1930s gave way to the 40s, Froman was in demand everywhere, working coast to coast via radio or on stage. But the approach of war soon added new venues to her schedule—and profoundly changed her life.



AMERICA IN WWII COLLECTION

Even before the United Service Organizations—the USO—started sending performers overseas to entertain GIs, Froman was volunteering for the war effort. She once appeared in Times Square under a huge sign that read "Give Your Aluminum," asking citizens to add to a growing pile of pots and pans for war production. Showman Billy Rose asked her to perform shows he was taking to stateside military bases, and in May 1941 she was at Fort Dix, New Jersey, to sing in the first one.

Froman sang at war-bond drives in Canada, too, visiting army camps there. Between gigs she sang over the American Armed Forces Radio network. When USO entertainment coordinator Abe Lastfogel asked 100 of the nation's top entertainers to work overseas, Froman wired back a "yes" within the hour. During her subsequent preparation to be in the USO's Foxhole Circuit, which performed overseas near the front, she probably heard about the USO's accident insurance policy: if hurt, she'd get $1,000 for medical expenses and a disability check of $50 a week for a year.

On February 21, 1943, Froman and 38 others, including a handful of USO entertainers, met at the Marine Air Terminal of New York City's airport to board Pan Am's *Yankee Clipper*. The group included banjo player and puppeteer Grace Drysdale, accordionist Gypsy Markoff, the dance team of Lorraine and Roy Rognan, singer Yvette Silver, and actress and singer Tamara Drasin (famous for debuting "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" and the wartime hit "I'll Be Seeing You" on Broadway). Only their camp show coordinator knew their final destination. They were to fly to Lisbon via Bermuda and the Azores, with their tour set for England and North Africa.

Its four engines roaring, the *Yankee Clipper* moved from the dock and used Long Island Sound as its runway. It would be a long flight, at least 22 hours, but the plane was comfortable.

The clipper flew to Bermuda to refuel, then went on to the Azores, off Portugal, arriving at 10:14 A.M. on February 22. At 4 P.M. the *Yankee Clipper* sent a coded message to Lisbon's airport saying it would be there in about three hours. As landing time approached, Pan Am sent a launch out onto the Tagus River to set out a string of lighted buoys as a guide.

At 6:15 P.M. Fourth Officer John Burn asked the performers to take their seats for the plane's final approach. The plane would land in 15 minutes. For some reason, Tamara Drasin took Froman's seat. Throughout the flight Drasin had sat with her back to the plane's nose. Now she sat in Froman's assigned seat, facing forward.

From a window Froman saw Lisbon's lights—and lightning—in the distance. Light rain was falling in the dusk. The plane dropped to 600 feet for identification by airport officials, customary during the war. The tower then radioed landing instructions. The pilot flew upriver, banking to the left twice, the last time low.

But the pilot misjudged his altitude. The *Yankee Clipper*'s left wingtip dipped into the water. The plane cartwheeled, broke apart, hit the river's surface, and sank in minutes. Some witnesses reported seeing flames erupt. "The confusion was terrific," Lorraine Rognan later told reporters. She and husband Roy were caught in the sinking plane. He fell, cried her name, and disappeared. "The water pushed me out [of the plane]," she said, "and in less than two minutes I found myself floating on the surface."

Bodies washed downriver in the swift current. Survivors clung to debris. Froman awoke underwater. Despite her swimming skills, she couldn't rise to the surface. Her legs weren't functioning, nor was her right arm. Using her left arm, she got her head above water and called for help. Closest to her in the water was Fourth Officer Burn. He himself had two broken vertebrae and a fractured skull, but was able to reach Froman and hold her head above water until they could get wreckage to hold onto.

Burn cautioned Froman not to look at her injuries lest she panic. She did anyway. Her right leg was broken so badly that bones were sticking out. What she couldn't see were her three cracked ribs, a compound fracture of her right forearm, a left leg nearly severed below the knee, a dislocated spine, a cracked pelvis,

Above: Jane Froman on the cover of a March 1938 issue of *Life*, shot by Alfred Eisenstaedt while she knitted between show rehearsals. Opposite, top: The six USO entertainers identified in this publicity photo were in the *Yankee Clipper* crash: (from left) Grace Drysdale, Tamara Drasin, unidentified, Froman, Lorraine Rognan, unidentified, Yvette Silver, and Gypsy Markoff. Opposite, inset: Froman's hometown newspaper ran an error-riddled Associated Press story on the crash that said only four women were on board and survivors' "injuries were not serious."

and bruises and cuts everywhere.

Far from the main wreckage, where the rescue boats were heading, Burn and Froman tried to keep calm with idle chatter. About an hour later a fishing boat came by, and a man leaned over the side to lift Froman from the chilly water. He fell in. A second man reached to stop him, and he too fell in. Agitated, the third man in the boat accidentally stalled the engine, and the boat drifted away without Froman and Burn. Somehow, the wounded pair found humor in the situation and kept their spirits up until a second boat arrived 20 minutes later.

On the dock, rescuers cut off Froman's wet clothes; she had already lost her coat, blouse, shoes, and stockings from the impact. She was then transported to a small hospital in Lisbon, where she was sedated while doctors evaluated her injuries. She couldn't move her arms or legs. Even her eyelids had stopped functioning. Finally, around midnight, doctors told her that they were about to operate on her and that her right leg was so badly broken they believed it should be removed. She adamantly forbade the amputation unless absolutely necessary, and even then she wanted to be told first. She refused anesthesia, afraid the doctors would amputate if she were unconscious. After a three-hour operation and a blood transfusion, she was put in a plaster cast from head to toe.

Of the *Yankee Clipper*'s 27 passengers and 12 crewmen, only 15 survived. Among the dead was Tamara Drasin, who had changed seats with Froman. Drasin's death would haunt Froman the rest of her life.

The surviving USO members had, like Froman, taken a beating. Rognan, in addition to losing her husband, lost seven teeth, hurt her back, and had a leg crushed. Grace Drysdale broke a leg and was hospitalized for three months. Gypsy Markoff incurred multiple injuries and recovered only after 17 operations. Yvette Silver, unhurt, saved Markoff's life by giving her a pillow to float on. The shock of the accident finally caught up to Silver six months later, when she collapsed during a USO show in England.

By the time Froman's husband, Don Ross, arrived in Lisbon, a month had passed. Froman and Burn were recovering in a convalescent home, where their friendship had deepened. Ross managed to secure passage on a Portuguese freighter to carry Froman home. For two weeks she endured choppy waters, seasickness, and at least one brush with a German U-boat, all while strapped to a board in a body cast. Upon arriving in the United States, she asked to be lowered so she could kiss the ground.

Froman was taken to a New York hospital to see a highly regarded orthopedic surgeon Ross had requested. Operations commenced immediately to correct the temporary repairs to Froman's legs and arm. These surgeries were just some of the estimated 39 operations Froman would endure due to the crash.

One operation removed a three-inch piece of wood from her forearm, but left the arm permanently deformed. The arm became the site of Froman's first case of osteomyelitis, a potentially lethal infection that seeks out damaged bones. In time it invaded her right leg, too, requiring numerous corrective surgeries because it would not let grafted bones adhere. Froman had to have bone grafts redone again and again because Ross's physician used an old technique. Were it not for FDR's express permission to allow Froman to have penicillin (at that time reserved for war use), she might have died. With every surgical setback, she asked Ross to find a doctor versed in newer methods, but he refused.

Medical bills rapidly consumed Froman and Ross's savings. Froman could still sing, but she couldn't walk. She was weak and had lost 48 pounds in the first eight weeks after her rescue. And she was often in arm and leg casts that weighed up to 50 pounds.

Nonetheless, doctors agreed with Ross that returning to work would be a boost for Froman. Ross planned to feature her in a Broadway revue he co-produced, *Artists and Models*. It took some doing to get around the obstacles to Froman's performance. Rehearsals, which started just seven months after the accident, were sometimes held in Froman's hospital room. On the set,

Jane Froman Injured When Clipper Plane Crashes and Burns; 24 on Board Die
Columbian Is One of 15 Survivors—All Are Injured, but None Is Seriously Hurt—First Accident in 1229 Trans-Atlantic Flights

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Froman was always seated, her wheelchair and casts hidden by pillows or clothes. When not in a wheelchair, Froman was lifted and carried by stagehands.

There were problems, of course. A cast would crack. Her scarred skin would split open. The putrid smell of infection would waft by the other actors despite her heavy perfume. And sometimes the stagehands, who would lift her 22 times each show, would drop her.

On October 11, 1943, premiere night in Boston, the stagehands dropped Froman first thing. The show was delayed briefly. Then the curtain opened, and something unexpected happened. Froman recalled, "I [received] an ovation from a standing audience as I finally [got] on stage. I [tried] in vain to keep control of a weeping company and a wildly clapping, cheering audience for 20 minutes."

The show moved to Broadway in November, and although its run was short, it proved Froman could work. Soon she was fielding offers from radio shows and clubs. If she wasn't carried onstage she used crutches, entering and exiting while the lights were down. Long gowns with full skirts (the style of the day, luckily) concealed a cast or the knee-to heel leg brace she would wear the rest of her life. Elbow length gloves or a flowing scarf hid her mangled forearm. A lift in her shoe corrected the one-inch disparity in her leg lengths, and a hidden wire cage kept her upright for long periods. The most innovative deception was Ross's design, a mobile platform that moved Froman, a piano, and an accompanist around a nightclub floor so she could get close to the crowd.

When Froman returned to the hospital in January 1944 to have a bone fragment removed, she also sought help for a related malady: codeine addiction. Told she needed yet another graft, Froman decided to go through with it immediately—without anesthesia. She wanted to quit all painkillers cold turkey.

Despite her return to the stage, Froman wasn't over the plane crash yet. Leg abscesses continued to require surgery, and pieces of metal and wood from the airplane slowly wormed their way out of her. A later estimate would indicate that Froman spent a cumulative three years in the hospital in the first six years after the accident.

But Froman fought hard for her recovery. When confined to bed, she did leg lifts to strengthen weak muscles. She knitted to

Luxury Ocean Liner on Wings

Crowds at the 1939 New York World's Fair saw aviation's future when the *Yankee Clipper* (taking off above) flew over them on its inaugural overseas flight.

The *Yankee Clipper* was a Boeing 314, the largest and most powerful plane of its day—a flying boat designed for transatlantic trips. By the time Jane Froman boarded, the *Yankee Clipper* had made 240 transoceanic flights without mishap. Its owner, Pan American Airways, was America's primary international airline.

Eleanor Roosevelt christened the plane in 1939. The 42-ton 4-engine craft was 106 feet long and 20 feet high with a 152-foot wingspan. It held 74 passengers.

Passengers got from the dock to the plane's door via one of two sponsons, wing-like attachments on the plane's sides that acted as gangplanks and stabilizers. Once aboard, passengers ascended a spiral staircase leading from a hull storage area to the carpeted passenger level and on to the crew quarters and cockpit. What passengers didn't see was that the large wings contained catwalks that allowed in-flight engine service.

The crew of 12, in naval-style uniforms, included pilots and navigators, but the most noticeable members were two stewards who attended to the passengers' needs. Cooks prepared multicourse meals in an elaborate galley. Food was served in a separate dining room with linen tablecloths and silver.

A passenger could find out who was on the plane by reading the passenger list, distributed to everyone. He could wander past soundproof conference rooms, the dining area, the lounge, or sleeping quarters (similar to Pullman car berths), or stop in at one of two dressing rooms, each equipped with a toilet and hot and cold running water.

A ticket for an Atlantic crossing cost around $942—about $14,000 in today's money, according to one source. The luxury was intended to compare with that of the era's stylish ocean liners.

When America entered the war, the War Department purchased all the clippers, leasing them back to Pan Am for a dollar. Crews were kept on, flying military cargo, military officers, diplomatic couriers, civilian businessmen on war missions, and war correspondents overseas. During the war the *Yankee Clipper*'s European destination was the continent's westernmost large city, neutral Lisbon, Portugal, and its Tagus River port.

The *Yankee Clipper*'s 1943 crash was Pan Am's sole fatal clipper accident. In 1947 Pan Am replaced its clippers with Lockheed Constellations, which had pressurized cabins and landed on ground rather than on water.

—*Patrice Crowley*

restore her fingers' dexterity. And she stayed involved with people, talking with visiting celebrities and friends, including John Burn.

In 1945, Froman decided she had regained enough stamina to do a USO tour. She was still on crutches, and the fighting was over in Europe, but the wounded and GIs awaiting reassignment were still there. "I'm sure I can bring them hope," she wrote. So that summer, she sailed to Paris with Ross and a USO troupe.

Outside Paris, thousands of US servicemen were living in tents, waiting to be sent home or to the Pacific. In three months Froman traveled 3,000 miles through Europe and put on 95 shows at camps and hospitals. She'd start each show in a wheelchair, stand on crutches as the show progressed, then throw the crutches away at the end. The wounded got her message: If I can keep going, so can you. "I had the time of my life," Froman wrote later. The tour ended in September when she dislocated a vertebra mounting a stage.

Lieutenant Frank P. Sherwood, entertainment officer of the XV Corps in Germany in 1945, was responsible for arranging everything for visiting entertainers. "The Froman performance was by far the most exciting and wonderful I had experienced," he wrote. "The invalided woman I had encountered on crutches had been transformed. She was absolutely radiant on stage. Elegantly seated before a simple curtain as background, she held the audience in her hands. What could not be imagined was how this crippled woman could create such a picture of beauty on the stage." The crowd of GIs, he said, "simply loved her."

Upon returning to the States, Froman remained in the news—as did her love life. When she divorced Ross in 1948 to marry fellow crash victim John Burn, every paper in the nation reported on it. Eight years later, papers would tell the story of the couple's breakup, brought on by the effects of a second deadly air crash on Burn and of the drinking problem Froman had developed.

A worn-out Froman turned for help to the Menninger Clinic in Topeka, Kansas, where psychiatrists diagnosed "battle fatigue"—depression from life's traumas. Her successful treatment showed the public that mental illness needn't be considered shameful but could be healed with proper care. What's more, while at the clinic Froman saw its school for emotionally troubled children, which, by coincidence, had been written about in the same issue of *Life* in which she had appeared back in 1938. She established a foundation to aid the school and for the rest of her life urged fans to donate.

A life story as dramatic as Froman's was a natural for Hollywood. In 1952, 20th Century Fox cast Susan Hayward as Froman in the film *With a Song in My Heart*. Froman dubbed the film's more than 20 songs. She also worked as a technical advisor on the script, approving everything except the studio's refusal to mention her drug addiction. Audiences loved the film and critics favored it.

That year, Froman also appeared regularly on the *small* screen—television. *USA Canteen* was a throwback to Froman's USO shows. Along with herself and other performers, it featured talented members of the armed forces. Both Eddie Fisher and Vic Damone, in their army uniforms, sang on the show. Renamed *The Jane Froman Show*, the program continued into 1955.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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Over the years, Froman had pursued compensation for expenses and losses resulting from the *Yankee Clipper* crash. In 1953, she appealed a 1949 verdict, seeking damages of $2.5 million. Gypsy Markoff also asked for compensation, $1 million. By 1952, one biographer noted, Froman's bills totaled $350,000; 10 years later, they would reach $500,000.

The appellants' lawyers contended that pilot error caused the crash, thereby nullifying the 1929 Warsaw Convention provision that limited compensation for international crashes to about $9,000 per person. But despite testimony from Froman and airport officials, the court ruled in favor of Pan Am, and the meager Warsaw Convention sum was all Froman and Markoff ever received from the airline.

As the fifties drew to a close, musical tastes were changing and Froman's three-decade career was waning. By 1961 she had left show business. Still hospitalized from time to time for crash-related ailments, and beset by emphysema caused by smoking, she spent her final years back in Columbia, Missouri, with a third husband, a fellow Columbian who had known her in college and had seen one of her USO shows in Germany. Froman died at home of cardiac arrest on April 22, 1980. Hollywood's Walk of Fame honors Froman with three stars, for her work in radio, records, and television. ★

Patrice Crowley *of Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, is the Landings editor of* America in WWII.

Top: Froman typically dressed in long sleeves and skirts to hide her crash injuries. Here, she sings for airmen at Camp Detroit in France in 1945. Above: This early 1950s photo is an unusual shot that shows signs of her injuries, including her leg brace and her deformed right forearm. Beside her is Susan Hayward, who played her in the 1952 biopic *With a Song in My Heart*.

A WWII Scrapbook

Buried under a roadway, the German *Tellermine* ("Dish Mine") 43 could blow up a tank and tear men apart. Good officers, like the lieutenant whom Private First Class Henry Smith saw in Germany, had engineers remove mines before sending men forward.

COURTESY OF THE WILLIAM S. JACKSON COLLECTION

A FOOL AND A MINEFIELD

THIS EVENT occurred after the Bulge. The enemy was trying to get back across the Rhine River to regroup. We were put under the command of the English.

We were called out one morning to help another engineer outfit, who were clearing a minefield on a vital road. When we arrived we were amazed at the amount of mines already removed, and they were only one-third of the way. We started in to help. There was a column of tanks and a company of infantry waiting

I had just carried a mine back to place it with the others when I saw a Lister Bag [a canvas bag full of chemically purified water] and decided to get some water. The bag was about six feet from the lead tank, on which a lieutenant was sitting.

An English officer approached. He asked the lieutenant, "Are you in charge, lieutenant?" The officer replied, "Yes." The E.O. said, "We have to move along faster. We have to keep our schedule. I'll call back the engineers, and you take your tanks up the road." The lieutenant said, "Sir, have you seen what they're taking out?" The reply was, "We have to expect to lose some men and some tanks, but we have to hold to the schedule. You will proceed."

The lieutenant thought to find a way out and said, "Sir, is that a direct order?" The answer was "Of course." There you have the problem. To refuse a direct order on a battlefield could be grounds for a court-martial and possible firing squad. To obey this direct order would be a disaster.

Finally the lieutenant took out his side arm. He didn't point it at anyone. He didn't threaten anyone. He said, "Alright, Sir, will you please get up on the tank?" The E.O. said, "What?" The lieutenant said, "I always lead my men, but in this case, it's only right that the man who gives the order leads the way. If you'll get upon the front of the tank, I'll give the order to start the engines."

The expression on that E.O.'s face was priceless. Finally he looked at his watch and said, "I'll give you a few more minutes." He marched away, back straight, face red.

The lieutenant turned to us (he had acquired an audience by now) and said, "I'll probably never get any higher than lieutenant now, but maybe I'll get to go home."

We went back to work, cleaned up the rest of the mines, checked to be sure there were no surprises, and called them on. Here came the lieutenant in his turret on the lead tank, with the infantry alongside. I hope he made it home. He saved a lot of lives besides his own.

Henry T. Smith
wartime private first class
292nd Combat Engineers, Ninth Army
East Hartford, Connecticut

'I THOUGHT MY LEG WAS GONE'

MY FATHER, David Clinton Tharp, was a decorated 101st Airborne paratrooper with the 502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment's headquarters. He served as a radio communicator for Lieutenant Colonel Robert G. Cole, Lieutenant Colonel John H. Michaelis, and Lieutenant Colonel Steve A. Chappuis. He received two Purple Hearts and the Bronze Star as well as two Presidential Unit Citations for the 101st Airborne's gallant efforts during D-Day and the Battle of the Bulge. He wrote several hundred letters back home to Indiana [published in the book *Comes a Soldier's Whisper* in 2013].

Dad wrote in one of his letters to my mother,

Now that my mail isn't censored, I can tell you how and when I was wounded in Hol-

COURTESY OF JENNY THARP LA SALA

Knocked out by a bomb blast in Holland, 101st Airborne paratrooper David Tharp panicked as he came to. Was his leg still attached?

land [during Operation Market Garden].

It was September 22, 1944, near St. Oedennrode [Sint-Oedenrode], Holland, at a forward observation post.... I was very tired that morning and didn't have to go [on duty] as I hadn't slept for 48 hours. However, the day before, the British had given tank support, and we also had it for that morning. We had kicked the hell out of them [the Germans] the day before. The Colonel [Michaelis] asked if I was to be his radio operator that morning, and I said, yes, I wanted to be in on it. He was a hell of a swell guy.

Anyway, the attack had just gotten under way, and there was a devil of an explosion over our heads. That's about all I remembered for 48 hours. When I came to my senses, I thought my leg was gone. That's one terrible feeling. [Fortunately, the leg was still there!] I think a million things must have flashed through my head at once.

I probably shouldn't have told you this. But you've asked several times, and I couldn't [tell you] then. The same shell killed two and wounded five. I guess it was quite a mess, not as bad as some I've seen though.

Dad mentioned once that he saw a soldier "vaporize into thin air." We knew he had much hidden pain, and yet we had no clue.

Jenny Tharp La Sala
Walworth, New York
daughter of **David Tharp**
wartime paratrooper, 502nd Parachute Infantry, 82nd Airborne Division

KEPT STATESIDE BY THE A-BOMB

I WANTED TO FLY. In 1944 the US Navy wanted combat air crewmen. I was only 17 years old, but I volunteered. I passed all my tests and left for training on December 26, 1944. My first base was ROTC in Memphis, Tennessee. Seven weeks of boot camp followed, then three months of extensive training to become an aviation radioman.

I stayed in Memphis to learn to become a radar operator. Then I moved on to Purcell, Oklahoma, to aerial gunnery school. I graduated all three schools: aviation radio, air radar, and aerial gunnery school. We were about to go overseas when they dropped the two atomic bombs and the war came to an end.

I was very proud of the time I spent in the US Navy. I would have given my life for my country and still would.

Robert Kummer, Sr.
US Navy aviation radioman
Ho-Ho-Kus, New Jersey

AMERICA IN WWII LINGO!

1940s GI and civilian patter

prune: an inefficient airman.

behavior report: letter to a girl, as in "the prune always forgot to send behavior reports to his girl."

bubble dancing: washing the dishes, as in "the prune will be doing all of the bubble dancing when he gets home."

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I WAS THERE

Paralyzed at the Siegfried Line

Paul Karl Claus • interviewed by Terry W. Burger

NATIONAL ARCHIVES. INSET COURTESY OF PAUL KARL CLAUS

Paul Karl Claus was born in Baltimore, Maryland. He went to school, made friends, made plans, and grew up. Then America went to war, and just over a year later, he received a piece of mail from the Selective Service System dated on his 18th birthday, March 15, 1943. It was a draft notice and, as millions of other young men learned, it changed everything.

Claus boarded a train to Fort Lee, Virginia, where he took the oath of enlistment on June 18. Before long, he was a private first class in the US Army. He didn't know it yet, but he had a date with destiny on what would become the most famous beach in American military history.

Terry W. Burger: How long were you at Fort Lee?

Paul Karl Claus: I was there for about three days, and then they shipped me over to Fort Custer, to an MP outfit for training

Fort Custer, near Battle Creek, Michigan, was a military training base, primarily for military police. It was the activation point

Above: US Army infantry advances through Aachen, Germany, with armor support in mid-October 1944. The city was symbolically important to the Nazis, and they battled hard to keep it. A shell explosion during the fighting sent radioman Paul Karl Claus (inset) flying through the air, temporarily paralyzing him.

for many WWII army inductees from the Midwest. New troops received their equipment there before heading off to basic training. It also served as a prison for 5,000 German POWs and a hospital for American casualties from Europe.

Burger: So you trained to be an MP?

Claus: No. I was there for three days, and then they shipped me off for automotive schooling.

Burger: What did that involve? Were you to be a mechanic?

Claus: No. This was strictly front line stuff. This was where you just replaced parts in jeeps, weapon carriers, command cars (not tanks or things like that).

Burger: Just get it running and get it out of there, more or less?

Claus: That's right. You didn't have time to stand around trying to figure it out. We learned how to get the part out fast. There wasn't any time to be elegant about it.

Burger: Where was this automotive training held?

Claus: It was right there at Fort Custer.

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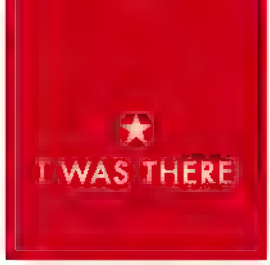

When I got there I had been in the service about three weeks, and I graduated three months later.

Burger: You eventually served in Company A of the 18th Infantry Regiment of the 1st Infantry Division?

Claus: That's right.

Burger: Where did they send you for training after your stint in the automotive school?

Claus: They shipped me back to the MP base for two days, and then I shipped to New York to be sent overseas. I went with them on the *Queen Elizabeth* [the massive British ocean liner used as a troop ship during the war] to Scotland and then to southern England.

Burger: Where in southern England?

Claus: It was Weymouth. All the outfits that went there became replacements [for killed, wounded, or missing soldiers], me included. Whatever we trained for, we were suddenly infantry.

Burger: Wait, you said you went from Custer to automotive school. Where did you take basic training?

Claus: Well, that's an odd thing. At Weymouth, the "Old Man," a Captain Bacon, interviewed everybody personally. When he talked to me, he noticed in my records that I had not actually been to basic.

Burger: No basic training?

Claus: That's right. Captain Bacon said the law says you have to have basic before you're even allowed to ship overseas.

Burger: Sounds like somebody screwed up the paperwork. So what did they do, send you back for training?

Claus: No. They made me a radio operator. You flip a switch, turn a dial, and you're a radio operator. The captain got a first sergeant to show me how to use a rifle and whatever other equipment I might need in the field, and then I was off to radio school.

Burger: That's a heck of a story.

Claus: Leave it to me.

Burger: How did radio school go?

Claus: I learned Morse code, I learned to key, and I learned how to use flags and lights—semaphore, they called it. I told them that I wasn't going to be flashing lights and stuff like that at night. I told them that right away.

Burger: How close to D Day was this going on?

Claus: We knew it was coming. We were informed how we were going to be transported. On June 5 [1944], they loaded us onto an LCI [landing craft, infantry] to cross the Channel. We were going to make the invasion then, but the weather was bad. We tried again June 6, and that one stuck. We crossed the channel in an LCI, and then they put us on Higgins boats [LCVP, landing crafts, vehicle, personnel—smaller than LCIs] to get close to the beach. It so happened that the tide was out, so we had to walk quite a distance to get across the beach.

Burger: Which beach was that, and what time of day?

Claus: It was Omaha Beach, and about

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6:30 or 7:00 in the morning. I wasn't looking at my watch.... There were other things that had my attention.

Burger: This is probably a stupid question, but did you think you were going to die?

Claus: I was pretty sure of it. I was very lucky. I didn't think I'd ever get off that beach. Everything was getting hit.... I mean, everybody was being killed around me. I knew pretty soon I was going to get it, or at least get injured. I didn't think I'd make it. The numbers were against me. But I think the Lord was walking with me, because I got through it without being wounded.

Burger: Those are pretty horrific memories to carry around with you.

Claus: It's a funny thing. Some of the guys couldn't forget the war. I was lucky. I forgot it as soon as I walked out of there with my discharge papers

Burger: Nobody I have talked to from D-Day thought he would live through it. All the accounts I have heard and read indicate it was unbelievably horrific. What did you do once you got off the beach?

COURTESY OF PAUL KARL CLAUS

Private First Class Paul Claus (second from right, rear) poses in front of a captured Nazi flag with members of his Company A of the 18th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division.

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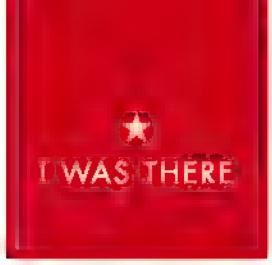

Claus: The next day we helped take some of the high ground, which wasn't very far [from the beach]. From that point on, every little village became a battle. The Germans were determined to stop us. I don't remember the names of all those little places. When you're in the infantry, you're kind of confined to a small area. You only know what's going on right where you are, if that.

Burger: That went on for how long?

Claus: Oh, for every little village and town, all the way into Paris. It just went on and on. It was real work.

Burger: So you were part of the action in liberating Paris?

Claus: No. Not too far from Paris, they held us back and had us wait for another unit to go in first. I never knew what unit it was. What we heard was that they had liberated Paris in World War I, so they let them do it again.

Burger: Did things get any easier for you once you left Paris behind?

Claus: Not really. After we left Paris we were into hedgerow territory. In that part of the country, instead of fences, they would have dirt piled up five or six feet high in long rows, with shrubbery planted on top. Each one of those was a battlefield all on its own. They were a mess.

Burger: We understand that the opposing forces could be very near each other and neither would know the other was there.

Claus: One time, I climbed up a hedgerow and looked out through the bushes. There was a German soldier looking right at me. He ran one way and I ran another. Like I said, it was a mess

Burger: Well, that was a moment to remember for both of you. He might very well still tell that story to his grandkids.

The 18th Infantry was now driving north toward Aachen, Germany, a city along the Siegfried Line of defenses that protected the western border of Germany. Three miles from Aachen, at Verlautenheide, the men attacked at dawn on October 8 and took the rural town quickly.

Though Verlautenheide was close to Aachen, it seemed much farther due to the rough terrain and the pillboxes manned by German gunners in between. The commander of the 18th, Colonel George A. Smith, Jr., and his troops had experience on their side, at least, having learned some effective countermeasures. Smith organized special pillbox assault teams with flamethrowers, obstacle-clearing Bangalore torpedoes, beehive anti-personnel rounds, and assorted demolition charges, as well as self-propelled 155mm guns and tank destroyers.

On the night of the 9th, two companies of the 18th advanced in the dark to take strategically important Ravels Hill without firing a shot. So quiet was that action that four unwitting Germans arrived during the morning of October 10 to deliver hot food for 65 of their comrades. The Americans promptly captured the quartet and took the victuals for themselves before moving on.

Burger: And so you came to Aachen?

Claus: Yes. That was the first German city we came to. It was in a valley, with three sides of it high ground. The Germans had held all of them. They were determined we were not going to take their city.

The Germans clung to Aachen like burrs. Though the ancient city had no great military significance, it was an important cultural and historical symbol to Adolf Hitler and the Nazis. At one time it had been the capital of the Holy Roman Empire. The emperor Charlemagne was born there, and his empire lasted in one form or another for more than 1,000 years. The Nazis romanticized that empire as the model for their own. Hitler often prophesied that his empire, like Charlemagne's, would last a thousand years.

Burger: How determined were the Germans to maintain possession of Aachen?

Claus: They worked hard to keep it. My girlfriend sent me a newspaper clipping saying that Aachen had been taken, but it

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As Paul Claus found out, communications work for the US Army could be dangerous. Here, an operator sets up a radio out in the open on contested ground in Germany late in the war.

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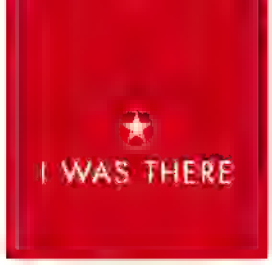

wasn't true, just propaganda. I got hurt and it still had not been taken.... We eventually took the high ground, with the Germans still in the valley. We closed the gap. Most of them gave up after that. I have no idea how many surrendered, but it was a lot. [By the time the Battle of Aachen ended on October 21, some 5,600 Germans had surrendered]

Burger: You said you were hurt. What happened?

Claus: I remember the Germans had a spotter up on a smokestack. We had a pillbox. We had the radio, but our telephone line went out. The Old Man sent me out to fix it. I was on top of the pillbox, splicing the wire, when a shell landed nearby. I remember flying through the air, and that's it. It was a 15-foot drop, not counting the horizontal distance I traveled. I landed on my back, on top of my radio. I was paralyzed from the waist down.

Burger: So that was the end of being in combat for you?

Claus: Yes. They got me down to the aid station. I was in terrific pain. All they could do is to put me into an ambulance and send me off. The ambulance got us back to a rail terminal, and we went to Paris by rail. From there they shipped me to Cherbourg, France, where I boarded a boat and we were sent back to England

Burger: Did they ship you home? Was it the end of the war for you?

Claus: No. I stayed in England, where I ended up in a hospital in Birmingham. There, they started giving me therapy, including a lot of massaging.... I was on a [back]board, I remember. After about three weeks I got to where I could start moving my back.

Burger: Did you get a Purple Heart for being wounded?

Claus: They told me I would get one. I never did, but I came out alive, so I don't care

Burger: Did they send you back to the States after that?

Claus: They started to. I got to a point where I could walk fairly well. I was classified as "limited service." I wasn't supposed to lift anything that weighed more than five pounds. They sent me to a replacement depot to be scheduled to go back to the States. I had only been there a couple of days when the Battle of the Bulge began [on December 16].

Burger: And all bets were off?

Claus: Yes. Everything changed in a hurry. Anyone that could use their hands got shipped back to Cherbourg again. I don't know where I ended up, but we were there to replace guys who had worked in clerical things. Those guys were armed and sent to the front.... I went from being a radio operator to a switchboard operator. I was with them until the end of the war in [May] 1945. They announced that anybody with more than 100 points could go home. I had 140. They said I'd go home right away. That was a bunch of crap.

Burger: Where did you go instead?

Claus: I served in about five different outfits for various lengths of time and finally wound up in Marseilles [France], where I eventually wound up on a Liberty ship to the States

Burger: And then?

Claus: The trip was supposed to take eight days. That's when we ran into the hurricane [the Outer Banks hurricane of late June 1945].

Burger: It seems you had trouble catching a break.

Claus: Right. We spent 21 days at sea because of that storm. A lot of the guys got seasick and stayed that way. Belowdecks was beyond description. There they were, sick as dogs, lying in bunks that were separated vertically by only about a foot. The smell –I don't even have words for it.

Burger: How far off course did the storm push you?

Claus: Instead of landing in New York City, we wound up at Newport News, Virginia. There was supposed to be a big welcome for us in New York, but we missed it. At Newport News, what we got that morning was two Red Cross girls with coffee and donuts.

Burger: Was it then that the war finally started to wind down for you?

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Claus: Yes, finally. I was only at Newport News for a couple of days before they put me on a train to Fort [George G.] Meade [in Maryland], which was the closest military base to my home in Baltimore. They gave me a physical and made sure I didn't have any form of VD. Guys who had VD, they wouldn't let them go until they were cleared of it. Anyway, I was there for about a week and was discharged on December 20 of 1945.

Waiting for Claus back home was a fiancée, Margaret Bestervelt. He had met her at a USO dance at Fort Custer. They corresponded regularly while he was overseas and got engaged through the mail.

Claus: After I was discharged, I went to Fort Custer to visit her and her family in Kalamazoo, Michigan. I was there for a couple of weeks, and then I came home to look for a job. I heard there were 13 million of us coming home from the war and looking for work. I was lucky. My third day back, I got a job....

CLAUS AND BESTERVEIT *got married on February 23, 1946, and had three children. They lived in Baltimore until he retired, after which they moved to the small town of Arendtsville, Pennsylvania. Their marriage lasted 58 years, until Margaret's death on Christmas Eve 2003. Paul now lives in a retirement home in Gettysburg.* ★

TERRY W. BURGER, *a long-time newspaper reporter and a former assistant editor of* America in WWII, *has interviewed many WWII veterans over the years. He talked with Paul Claus for this article in early 2013 at the retirement home where Claus lives and again as this issue was going to press.*

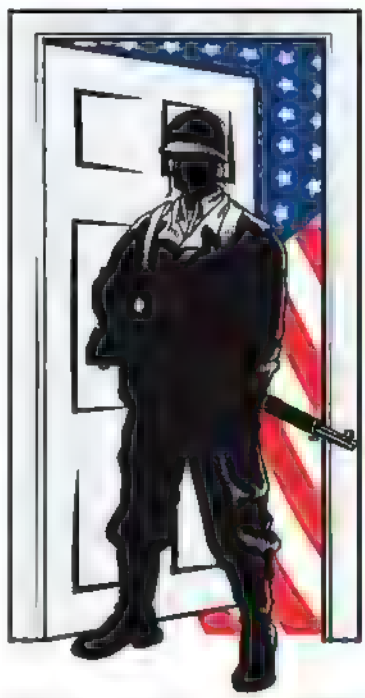
NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The Handie-Talkie from Galvin Manufacturing Company (later Motorola) was the state-of-the-art portable communication technology of its day. This army radio operator in Aachen keeps in contact with headquarters during the October 1944 battle for the city.

THE VETERAN NEXT★DOOR

Stories from World War II Vol. 1

By Randall Baxter



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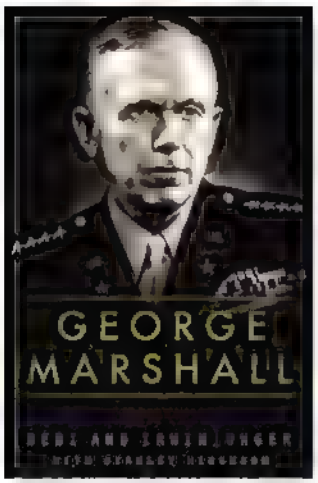

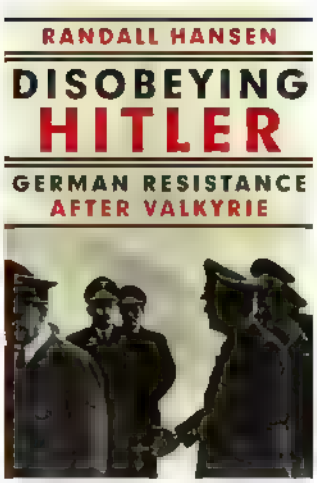

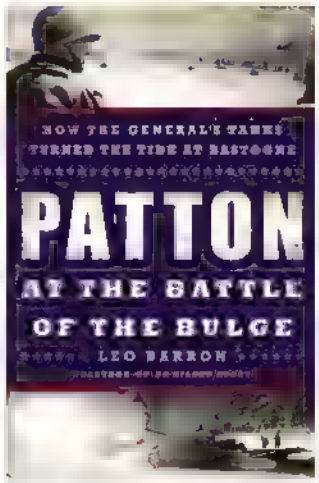

George Marshall: A Biography
by Debi and Irwin Unger with Stanley Hirshson, Harper, 560 pages, $35

ABOUT HALFWAY THROUGH *George Marshall: A Biography*, the authors describe a scene between President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and General Dwight Eisenhower just after Roosevelt had selected Eisenhower over army Chief of Staff George Marshall to command the invasion of Normandy. Roosevelt commented, "...they both knew who had served as Lincoln's chief of staff in the last years of the Civil War [Henry Halleck], but virtually no one else did, while 'every schoolboy' knew the names Grant, Lee, Sherman, and Jackson." Roosevelt was concerned that "fifty years from now, practically nobody will know who George Marshall was."

It may have been longer than Roosevelt predicted, but most people do not know much about George Marshall except for some vague notion of the Marshall Plan. In fact, Marshall had a long career at the highest levels of public service during World War II and afterward. He was army chief of staff during World War II, secretary of state in the early days of the Cold War, and secretary of defense during the Korean War.

Marshall was born in 1880 and grew up in Uniontown, Pennsylvania. Despite the Pennsylvania background, his family strongly identified with Virginia. Keeping to that, Marshall considered prominent Virginians, especially George Washington, his role models. He attended Virginia Military Institute and became an officer in the army in 1902.

It was the Great War that gave Marshall the opportunity to distinguish himself. He became a member of General John Pershing's staff, and he excelled in coordinating and planning major operations. Post war, he continued working for Pershing and then filled a number of positions, nearly all of them focused on training and modernizing the army. Roosevelt appointed him chief of staff in 1939, and Marshall had to prepare the nation for war by turning millions of mostly isolationist civilians into soldiers. He had to develop and coordinate grand strategy with the president, the secretary of war, and the navy, as well as with America's allies. Finally, he had to manage the personnel (and personalities!) at the highest level of the army.

This biography does a good job of clearly laying out the various conferences, deliberations, and decisions in which Marshall participated. It notes where he deserves credit—mobilizing the nation, promoting effective leaders, and successfully arguing for an invasion of France over British objections—but is also highly critical of his performance on several issues both during and after the war.

The book makes for fascinating reading, but it would be better if the authors had included more material from Marshall himself. There are very few direct quotes from him. As a result, the book's focus is much more on the events that Marshall participated in than on how he felt about them or why he chose to pursue the actions that he did. The lack of an inside look at his thinking makes it difficult for readers to assess both his performance in high level positions and the authors' appraisal of it.

The authors include a thesis that argues Marshall does not fully deserve the praise he received for his public service, yet the degree of criticism directed at Marshall often is not justified by the text. For exam-

ple, many people during the war criticized Marshall's policy on replacement soldiers: doling them out to existing units in twos or threes rather than raising new units and replacing worn out ones en masse. This policy contributed to low overall troop quality, poor unit cohesion, and poor battlefield performance by American soldiers. The book asserts that Marshall stood by the policy, but it does not explain his reasons for doing so. It is impossible to tell whether Marshall was inattentive to the situation, firmly believed that the policy was the right one, or saw greater disadvantages with the alternatives. Nevertheless, Americans soldiers defeated the Germans. Objectively, the replacement policy was flawed, but it was good enough to accomplish the job.

Good enough is often what happens in war. Where the book offers censure of Marshall, I often perceive a more straightforward explanation centered in the collaboration, compromises, and lack of both time and information that characterized how Britain and the United States waged war. Marshall made several mistakes while serving at the highest levels, but *George Marshall: A Biography* ultimately shows them to be honest mistakes outweighed by accomplishments. This is a thorough biography with a thought provoking thesis of a man who deserves to be better remembered.

DREW AMES
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Why the Japanese Lost
by Bryan Perrett, Naval Institute Press, 256 pages, $28

TWO GENERATIONS HAVE passed since Japan surrendered on September 2, 1945, aboard the USS *Missouri*, and during that time some consensus has emerged about what caused Japan's defeat. For one thing, its industry was inadequately organized and prepared. For another, it adopted an artisanal approach to producing pilots and aircraft when both were needed in industrial quantities. The army and navy were adversarial, even more so than in the United States. Japan lost the intelligence war and it disdained to make allies from the Asian peoples it claimed to be liberating from white dominance.

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Additionally, the island nation seriously overreached. Most fatally, I would argue, it misread its chief adversary's values and responses. This misperception was the root cause of Japan's loss of the war.

Bryan Perrett's surprising history *Why the Japanese Lost* is a striking departure from this view of the Pacific war. He believes we must understand the span of Japanese naval history to understand Japan's defeat in 1945. He casts a wide net, beginning in the pre-modern period with Japanese conflicts with the Mongols in the 1200s and moving up to the British in the 1800s and Russians in the early 1900s. This approach is certainly innovative, not least because it plays to Japan's strengths rather than its weaknesses, and it is not at all what one expects from a WWII history

As interesting as this material is, its value is offset by odd choices in perspective and presentation. For instance, Perrett's description of Japanese coastal squabbles with England in the early 1800s is taken almost exclusively from the British perspective and focuses on tactics rather than geopolitics or strategy. Looking at Japan's clash at sea with Russia decades later, Perrett focuses more on intrigues within Moscow, rather than on Tokyo, where we would expect to see the emphasis. In the end, he gives no explanation for how this information contributes to understanding Japan's failure in 1945.

Not until chapter six does Perrett address Japan US interwar relations. These were complicated by Japan's dissatisfaction over the 1922 Washington Naval Treaty, which limited naval buildup, and by widespread disgust abroad for Tokyo's unapologetic encroachments in China. Estrangement resulted in increased truculence from Tokyo, as was seen in repeated attacks on British and American vessels in the late 1930s.

Once he begins analyzing World War II, Perrett catches his narrative stride. Readers will learn much about Tokyo's manic joyride early in the war, when Japan's defeat was not at all inevitable. He recounts the attacks on Pearl Harbor, Singapore, Hong Kong, the Philippines, the Dutch Indies, and Wake Island briskly though serviceably. In those times, the Japanese army and navy displayed imagi

nation, verve, resourcefulness, flexibility in tactics, and even occasional panache. This is quite easy to forget when looking back through the subsequent bloody years of Japanese wartime barbarism.

By the spring of 1942, the victory train had irretrievably derailed, and almost every significant campaign that followed ended in disaster for Japan, as America's tactics matured and its matchless industrial capacity focused on war production. Perrett fol lows the naval campaigns that stretched from Pearl Harbor to Tokyo Bay in 1945. These narratives are a breezy read.

It's peculiar when I find myself thinking more about what a book excludes than what it includes. Yet I constantly noticed curious exclusions: Iwo Jima, the fire raids on almost all major Japanese cities, the Okinawa campaign, the nuclear impetus to surrender, the naval war of attrition, the eradication of Japan's once majestic air force, and the dynamic, if belated, entry of the Soviet Union into the war. Surprisingly, Perrett emphasizes Allied viewpoints and experiences, as in the account of Leyte Gulf, rather than the Japanese perspective. These Allied accounts are standard, and while they generally reflect well on Allied sailors, soldiers, and airmen, they do not illuminate the causes for Japanese defeat. Even though both sides are represented, the narrative of Japanese action lacks equal specificity and focus.

Why the Japanese Lost also lacks an introduction or a conclusion. It would have benefited by their inclusion, both for interpretation and explanation, because as written, the book abruptly concludes with Emperor Hirohito's August 1945 radio surrender address to his people. Certainly vast archives of material are available for study to provide for more analysis. Had Perrett consulted these, they would have added depth and perspective. Their absence means that this book tells us not so much *why* Japan lost as *how* it lost.

So, who will enjoy *Why the Japanese Lost*? Certainly readers interested in the naval war history of Japan will appreciate

the accounts of pre-1930 conflicts and their conduct. Devotees of Russian military history may enjoy reading about Moscow's repeated skirmishes with Tokyo. And Perrett's account of the early months of World War II (pre-Midway) certainly reminds us why US victory was not inevitable. Few readers will find their thinking changed or challenged, but Perrett's telling of Japan's buildup to World War II and the war's early months will interest many.

THOMAS MULLEN
Flemington, New Jersey

Disobeying Hitler: German Resistance after Valkyrie

by Randall Hansen, Oxford University Press, 470 pages, $29.95

JUST AFTER MIDDAY on a hot day in late July 1944, Colonel Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg attempted to assassinate Adolf Hitler by placing a briefcase filled with explosives under a large wooden table where Hitler was sitting with other Nazi officials. Not long afterward, Stauffenberg excused himself and watched from a distance as the explosion detonated in the final act of Operation Valkyrie.

Hitler survived. Stauffenberg did not. He and more than 100 co-conspirators were later executed for their participation in the coup attempt. Never again did a bid to rid Germany of Hitler come so close to succeeding. Even so, Randall Hansen, in his new work *Disobeying Hitler: German Resistance after Valkyrie*, maintains that resistance did not end there; it just took on a new form.

On September 7, 1944, less than two months after the assassination attempt, as German forces retreated deeper into home territory in response to Allied pressure, Hitler announced in an editorial published in the Nazi mouthpiece *Völkischer Beobachter*, "Not a German stalk of wheat is to feed the enemy, not a German mouth to give him information, not a German hand to offer him help. [The enemy] is to find every footbridge destroyed, every road blocked—nothing but death, annihilation and hatred will meet him." In essence every German, soldier or civilian, was instructed

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By E M Owsiany

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to destroy infrastructure, food resources, museums, cultural treasures—anything and everything—so that nothing "of any service to the enemy could be allowed to fall into his hands."

But Hansen says it was more than that. As defeat crept closer, Hitler and his generals grew increasingly psychopathic, and murder became "more than tactical: it was an end in itself..., [as] civilians would not be killed in order to win the war; rather, the war would be waged and won so that the murder of civilians could be perfected."

Even though most high-ranking German officers and Nazi party officials were too far gone into Hitler's mania to pull back, Hansen maintains that a "morally and militarily important minority" of lower-ranking German officers and a significant number of civilians said no to "Hitler's nihilistic orders for the destruction of Germany and Europe" by refusing to obey and thereby showed themselves to be resisters.

To give any credence to Hansen's argument, it's necessary to understand how he defines resistance. He positions his definition between that of military historian Klaus-Jürgen Muller, who said resistance includes desire to overthrow the system in power, and that of social historian Martin Broszat, who said resistance includes "every passive and active decision that implied rejection of the regime and that entailed risk." A couple of examples of the latter were refusing to offer the Heil Hitler greeting and knowingly entering a Jewish shop. Hansen acknowledges that this kind of resistance is difficult to measure, and even to notice.

Hansen's midway position focuses on "disobedience." He estimates that half of German cities surrendered without opposition, which he counts as acts of resistance. By his measure, it was resistance when German General Dietrich von Choltitz "lost" the keys to the Louvre in Paris, preventing Hitler's SS officers from removing the Bayeux Tapestry. And when Choltitz refused to destroy bridges, railroads, and factories, he made it easier for France to recover after the war.

Hansen's argument is well-researched, and by his definition of resistance, it succeeds, but it is nonetheless hard to swallow. The extermination of six million Jews and the execution of hundreds of thousands of others hangs in the balance. Refusing to burn a factory, hiding a tapes-

★ THEATER OF WAR

Where Eagles Dare

Directed by Brian G. Hutton, written by Alistair MacClean, starring Richard Burton, Clint Eastwood, Patrick Wymark, Mary Ure, Ingrid Pitt, Derren Nesbitt, 1968, 158 minutes, color, rated M/PG

One weekend Major Smith, Lieutenant Schaffer, and a beautiful blonde named Mary decided to win World War II.
Richard Burton · Clint Eastwood
"Where Eagles Dare"

WHERE EAGLES DARE doesn't waste time. The film opens as an airplane with German markings flies across a frozen, mountainous landscape. Aboard, Allied agents, under the command of Major Smith (Richard Burton), prepare to make a parachute drop behind enemy lines. Only one of them, Schaffer (Clint Eastwood), is American. The rest are British.

A quick flashback to their briefing by Colonel Taylor (Patrick Wymark) explains their mission. The Germans have shot down an American plane behind their lines. An American general on board knows the Allied plans for a second front, and the Germans are holding him prisoner in a mountaintop fortress. The agents will infiltrate the fortress and rescue him before the Germans can extract his knowledge.

But it soon becomes apparent there's more going on than meets the eye. After the team bails out into the snowy wilderness below, a mysterious blonde (Mary Ure) emerges from the cockpit. She follows the men out of the airplane, and things begin to unravel. The radio operator is found dead, his neck apparently broken by the fall. Smith notices evidence of foul play, but for some reason says nothing. When the team takes shelter at a deserted farmhouse, Smith excuses himself and sneaks into the adjoining barn and meets Mary. They are more than just friends, and they are clearly hatching some plot.

The movie keeps us guessing as the team approaches its goal. In the town below the fortress, Smith arranges a secret rendezvous with Heidi (Ingrid Pitt), who works undercover as a barmaid. She will help Mary infiltrate the fortress. Then another member of the team dies mysteriously, and the Germans take Smith and Schaffer into custody. The rest of the team is quickly rounded up. Mary manages to reach the fortress but immediately attracts the attention of odious Gestapo officer Van Hapen (Derren Nesbitt). It appears the mission is doomed even before it really begins.

But all is not lost. Smith and Schaffer escape their captors and, with Mary's assistance, scale the fortress walls. They seem on the verge of completing their mission, and then the plot twists again. Smith is a German agent. Or is he? It turns out the three captured members of his team work for the Germans. Or do

try, and surrendering a city without a fight are pale in comparison.

ALLYSON PATTON
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

Patton at the Battle of the Bulge: How the General's Tanks Turned the Tide at Bastogne
by Leo Barron, NAL Caliber, 416 pages, $27.95

THE ACCOUNT OF the desperate fight of the American army units trapped in Bastogne in December 1944 and their brave, dogged defense of that Belgian town is a well known episode in WWII history. Historian and US Army veteran Leo Barron revisits the battle for Bastogne in *Patton at the Battle of the Bulge: How the General's Tanks Turned the Tide at Bastogne*.

In the book's preface, Barron says that this is the sequel he had in mind when he wrote *No Silent Night: The Christmas Battle For Bastogne*, which he co-authored with Don Cygan. Barron states, "a story about a besieged force usually has two armies involved: the besieged and the forces sent to relieve them." In *Patton at the Battle of the Bulge*, Barron details the efforts made by the 4th Armored Division to smash their way through the German forces surrounding the city and relieve the trapped American soldiers

By December 1944 it seemed obvious that Adolf Hitler's Thousand Year Reich was about to crumble. After all, the Soviets were pressing in from the east and rolling up the opposing German units, and the Western Allies had gone ashore at Normandy in June 1944 and in southern France and were pushing Hitler's forces back toward the German border. On August 1, 1944, General George S. Patton, Jr., took the reins of the Third Army, which was under the overall command of General Omar Bradley's Twelfth Army Group. The Third Army accomplished its mission to destroy German forces by tearing through France with blazing speed, and its progression stalled only because of a lack of gasoline and other supplies.

So the German Operation Watch on the Rhine came as a nasty shock to Allied forces. The objective of this offensive in the Ardennes was to split the Allied forces by driving hard to capture the port of Antwerp. In the push toward Antwerp, Hitler hoped to destroy enough troops to force the Allies to negotiate a peace. Once that was accomplished, he planned to move his forces east and defeat the oncoming Soviets.

Even though very few thought the Germans would be ready to surrender by Christmas, the ferocity and intensity of the attack that began on December 16, 1944, surprised the Allies. The Germans were aided by Allied overconfidence and bad weather that grounded Allied planes. The initial success of the German forces caused consternation in the Allied ranks that forced Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces to develop a strategy to contain the Germans very quickly. One element in this planning was the relief of Bastogne, an important transportation junction.

they? And is the American general really a general? Without giving too much away, the entire mission turns out to be a trick to expose the top German agent who has infiltrated British intelligence.

For its first three-quarters, *Where Eagles Dare* is a twisty thriller with plenty to keep viewers off balance. Unfortunately, for its last quarter or so, the surprises are replaced with non-stop machine gun battles. The Allied team burns through a ton of ammunition as they race pursuing Germans to a nearby airbase for extraction. Even as they fly away toward safety, they must deal with one more plot twist (albeit one I saw coming from a mile away).

Historians beware: *Where Eagles Dare* contains few traces of the real World War II. The movie could just as easily be set in the *Star Wars* universe with Imperial Stormtroopers in place of German soldiers. Nonetheless, it's an exciting bit of entertainment. "It is in parts the most hair-raising film I've ever seen," Burton noted. "Some of it made me shake even though I knew what was coming."

—TOM HUNTINGTON
Camp Hill, Pennsylvania

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Barron lays out his approach to the book's narrative in the preface, giving the reader a roadmap that proves very helpful. As he moves along, he provides the perspective not only of the Allies, but also of the Germans and some of the civilians caught in the fighting. This collection of participants' experiences lends richness to the well researched account.

A habit I have when first picking up a book on military history is to turn to the back and look over the author's sources. Barron does not disappoint. His use of official records from both the American and German units involved is extensive. He uses after-action reports, intelligence reports, official histories, oral histories, selected secondary sources, and much more to provide an engaging and stirring history of the 4th Armored Division's ultimately successful effort to reach Bastogne. The inclusion of the German perspective, especially of the 5th Parachute Division, is important.

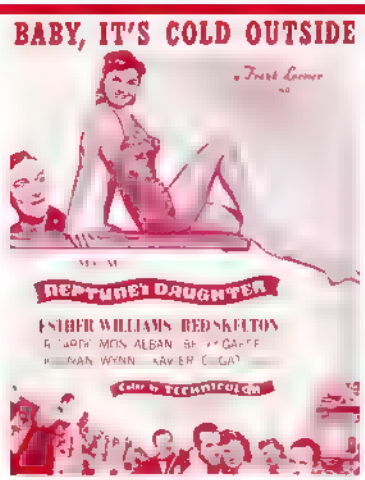
One possible weakness to the narrative is something that Barron is aware of and addresses in the preface. He writes that he "dramatize[s] the German operational briefings, turning them into dialogues." He admits that "purists" might find fault with this, but states that the dialogue is drawn verbatim from official accounts, and he has only added quotation marks. Were this book a purely academic study, that would be a problem. But whatever questions Barron's treatment may raise, his narrative flows smoothly and is accessible to any reader. It is heavy on the tactical perspective yet never sacrifices the strategic view of the offensive.

Barron's own military experience is underscored by the inclusion of maps—always a necessity in any book detailing military operations—as well as of the tables of organization for the Allied and German units. *Patton at the Battle of the Bulge: How the General's Tanks Turned the Tide at the Battle of the Bulge* is quite simply a gripping tale of the US Army's largest land battle.

MICHAEL EDWARDS
New Orleans, Louisiana

★ 78 RPM

They're Playing Our Song, Damn It!



ACTORS, DIRECTORS, singers, comedians, showbiz executives, and assorted fashionably dressed socialites filled the finely appointed room as songwriter Frank Loesser and his wife, Lynn, stepped up to entertain the gathering. They had a special treat for those attending the housewarming party at their new suite in Manhattan's posh Navarro Hotel in 1944.

On cue from the piano, the couple began singing the alternatively interrupting parts in Loesser's freshly written duet "Baby, It's Cold Outside," featuring a man trying to talk a woman out of heading home through the snow and frosty wind and remaining warm with him instead. "Father will be pacing the floor," she sings, and he retorts, "Listen to that fireplace roar." The verbal parry and riposte continues throughout. "It's a very sexy, flirtatious song," the Loesser's daughter Susan later said, "and they were very sexy and flirtatious when they did it."

The tune was a hit with the Loessers' friends, and invitations to the finest soirees in Hollywood and New York poured in and kept pouring in. On most of those occasions, through the war's end and beyond, the Loessers performed what Lynn introduced to their high-society audiences as "our song." Susan, an infant in those days, recalled, "My mother used to say, "It kept us in caviar and truffles for years."

Today, "Baby, It's Cold Outside" is a holiday song, but it wasn't written as one, and it wasn't inspired by a blizzard that made travel conditions treacherous. Loesser was a veteran songwriter by that time, and he labored through the creative process for it as he usually did: pacing about the office, gulping coffee, hitting some notes on the piano, smoking a cigarette and pacing some more, and sitting down at the piano again. It was difficult work, the songwriter might say; Susan would say, recalling her dad working in later years, "It looked kind of like play to me."

Film studio execs watched the Loessers' performance regularly at parties and kept pressuring Loesser to sell them the rights. He eventually gave in and the song premiered to the public in MGM's romantic comedy *Neptune's Daughter* in 1949. Lynn was incensed, figuring her husband had already made plenty of money on earlier hits such as "Heart and Soul," "Luck Be a Lady," and the early-WWII "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition" and didn't need to commercialize their personal song. "I felt betrayed as if I'd caught him in bed with another woman," she later said.

On the bright side, the tune took the Oscar for Best Original Song, and within a year, recordings by five different duos hit the charts five different times, with Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Jordan cutting the classic version. A decade later, the song got tied irrevocably to the holidays, when Dean Martin put his recording of it on his album *A Winter Romance* in 1959.

But by then, the Loessers' marriage had fizzled just as their song had become anyone's song. With their relationship in decline since at least the time of the song's nationwide debut, the Loessers divorced in 1957.

—CARL ZEBROWSKI
editor of *America in WWII*

WWII EVENTS

CALIFORNIA • **Nov. 29, Palm Springs:** "Young Man in the Wild Blue Yonder: A B-25 Pilot in World War II." Talk and book signing by David Hayward, WWII veteran and memoir author. Probably followed by flight exhibition. 1 P.M. Palm Springs Air Museum. 760-778-6262. www.palmspringsairmuseum.com

FLORIDA • **Oct. 31–Nov. 2, Stuart:** Stuart Air Show. Includes Aeroshell Aerobatic Team flying AT-6 Texans, rides in AT-6 Texans, WWII ground combat simulation, static displays including WWII aircraft. Night aerial show on Friday night. Witham Field. 772-781-4882. www.stuartairshow.com

IDAHO • **Dec. 7, Nampa:** Pearl Harbor Day events. Warhawk Air Museum, 201 Municipal Drive. 208-465-6446. www.warhawkairmuseum.org

KANSAS • **Nov. 6, Abilene:** "Cold War Kids: Politics and Childhood in Postwar America, 1945–1960." Lecture and book signing with Marilyn Holt, author of book of the same name. 7 P.M. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Museum, and Boyhood Home, 200 SE 4th Street. 877-RING-IKE. www.eisenhower.archives.gov

LOUISIANA • **Dec. 4–6, New Orleans:** "1944: Beyond All Boundaries." 2014 International Conference on WWII. Talks by historians including Rick Atkinson, Don Miller, Jim Hornfischer, Richard Frank, Gerhard Weinberg, Joe Balkoski, and Douglas Porch. Registration required. National WWII Museum, 945 Magazine Street. 504-527-6088. www.nationalww2museum.org

PENNSYLVANIA • **Nov. 8, Boalsburg:** Kid's Day II: Dress Up and Discover. Kids of all ages get to try on the field gear and headgear from the museum education collection. 10 A.M.—3 P.M. The Pennsylvania Military Museum, 51 Boal Avenue. 814-466-6263. www.pamilmuseum.org

TEXAS • **Nov. 1–2, Houston:** Commemorative Air Force Wings over Houston Air Show. This 30th annual show focuses on Vietnam War aircraft but includes WWII warbirds and WWII veterans. A WWII Messerschmitt Me 262 Schwalbe ("Swallow") jet fighter will be present. Ellington Airport. 713-266-4492. www.wingsoverhouston.com

Nov. 8–9, Fredericksburg: Pacific combat living history reenactments. Programs at 10:30 A.M. and 1 and 3:30 P.M. Saturday and 10:30 A.M. and 1 P.M. Sunday at the Pacific Combat Zone. National Museum of the Pacific War, 340 East Main Street. 830-997-8600. www.pacificwarmuseum.org

Dec. 7, Fredericksburg: Pearl Harbor observance. Patriotic music, presentation of colors, rifle salute, guest speaker. Begins at 12:25 P.M., the exact time when the Pearl Harbor attack begin in 1941. National Museum of the Pacific War, 340 East Main Street. 830-997-8600. www.pacificwarmuseum.org

VIRGINIA • **Dec. 12–14, Bedford:** Flames of Memory and Christmas in Wartime presentation. Luminaria display honoring the men killed on D-Day, June 6, 1944. Memorial donations for luminaria are welcome. 6–10 P.M. each night. National D-Day Memorial, 3 Overlord Circle. 540-586-3329. www.dday.org

WASHINGTON, DC • **Dec. 7:** Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day at the World War II Memorial. Friends of the National World War II Memorial and the National Park Service co-host this annual ceremony. 1:53 P.M. World War II Memorial. 17th Street, between Constitution and Independence avenues. 202-675-2017. www.wwiimemorialfriends.org

Please call the numbers provided or visit websites to check on dates, times, locations, and other information before planning trips.

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Tending Wounded at Pearl Harbor

Bill McAnany was a US Navy hospital corpsman at Pearl Harbor when the Japanese attacked. Aboard the US hospital ship *Solace*, he and shipmates pulled bodies from the water in the aftermath.

When Bill McAnany signed up for the US Navy's hospital corps in 1938, he didn't expect to find himself in the middle of a war. But a few years later, that's where he was, and the bodies started dropping right away.

McAnany joined the navy in search of the education he couldn't get on his own in Wood River, Illinois. Eventually, he was accepted for training at the Naval Hospital Corps School. He decided to enroll after learning that his only other option was to become a seaman aboard a ship. He soon began training and worked at the navy hospitals in Virginia and Philadelphia over the next three years.

In August 1941, McAnany said goodbye to land-based assignments when he received orders to serve on the USS *Solace (AH-5)*, a former cruise liner converted to a 400-bed hospital ship. Shortly after he went aboard, the ship departed for Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, arriving on October 27, 1941.

A little more than a month later, on the morning of December 7, McAnany witnessed history. "We saw anti-aircraft bursts going off and a plane fall out of the sky," he recalled. "I wondered what in the hell was going on." He and some fellow corpsmen returned to the harbor's Ford Island, which had been hit by the Japanese, and they tended to wounded servicemen. Back on board the *Solace*, McAnany pulled bodies out of the water until the ship departed.

McAnany went on to support major battles in the Pacific, including those at Midway and Iwo Jima. He continued to serve on hospital ships, including the USS *Samaritan*, a WWI transport converted to a 700-bed vessel.

McAnany retired from the navy in 1958. Thinking back on his WWII experiences, he says, "After seeing how some of these guys would come in critically wounded, fighting for breath just to stay alive..., you quickly realize that life is a gift not meant to be wasted." ★

Submitted by Jeremy P. Amick *of the veterans aid organization Silver Star families of America. Adapted by* James George, *editorial intern.*

Send your GIs photo and story to editor@americainwwii.com or to GIs, America in WWII, 4711 Queen Ave., Ste. 202, Harrisburg, PA 17109

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